



# **Designing the Best Possible Shopping Experience for Ecommerce**

Focus on the fashion vertical

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## ABSTRACT

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This thesis forms a hypothesis and defines the methods for creating the best possible shopping experience for ecommerce. The focus on the fashion vertical was selected to enable a more compact entity and unified example cases. In the practical part, the theory was utilized in creating marketing materials to visualise the power of a company offering personalisation solutions for online stores. The main objective was to create a comprehensive guide offering valuable insight into the world of ecommerce. The research problem was to find and specify the most important attributes that have an effect on the shopping experience. The research was conducted by examining professional literature in the fields of user experience, web design, marketing and ecommerce as well as blog posts, articles and expert interviews with some of the key experts of the commissioning company.

The solution to the problem was identifying the key components affecting the user's shopping experience and selecting the three main points of focus: the user, the device and the content. By examining and analysing each of these focal points, it is possible to form a solid hypothesis on how to build an online store optimised for the user.

The first conclusion was that the user of the online store must be studied thoroughly by creating a user persona that takes into consideration the needs, desires and obstacles of a person belonging to the target group. The behavioural data captured when visiting the online store together with an array of previously published studies on consumer behaviour provide a broad foundation for designing an ecommerce company. Secondly, it is essential to understand the possibilities and restrictions of responsive web design and make sure that the usability is optimised for each device that can be used for browsing the store. The last discovery was that it is becoming increasingly important for the online stores to plan and produce quality content that will both attract new customers and retain the existing customer relationships. The research project introduced at the end of the thesis will show a way to visualise the optimisation of the entire customer journey.

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Key words: ecommerce, user experience, personalisation, customer journey.



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## GLOSSARY

Ecommerce	Electronic commerce. Trading of goods or services online.
E-store, online store	A business that sells goods online.
Brick-and-mortar business	A common description of a company possessing a physical store for operations.
Conversion	The amount of visitors on an online store who take a desired action.
HTML	Hypertext Markup Language, used to code websites.
CSS	Cascading Style Sheets, can be used to define styles on a website.
Responsive web design	Creating websites that are optimised for multiple screen resolutions.
Fluid/liquid layout	Web layout where the components have percentage widths that allow the layout to adjust according to the screen size.
Adaptive layout	Web layout that consists of multiple different layouts that change according to the screen size.
UGC	User generated content.

## 1 INTRODUCTION

Ecommerce and e-businesses have vastly changed the consumer behaviour of today's people. Markets, shopping centres as well as little boutiques have been transforming in virtual spaces without an exact location, enabling to attract any customer in a world who happens to have an access to a decent internet connection. With a limited amount of start-up capital, almost anyone can start an online business without having to worry about the location and all the inconveniences that it possibly brings: most obviously, the geographical limitations, and all the costs that come with having a business space; such as the rent, the personnel and a storage space, to name a few. Because of the fact that ecommerce is, in many ways, a lot easier than more traditional business models, it has become incredibly popular over the past decade, both to businesses providing these services as well as the customers. There are well-known ecommerce giants such as Amazon with a net revenue of US\$ 74.45 billion (United States Securities and Exchange Commission 2014.) and Ali Baba, an ecommerce empire originated from China that in 2014, was listed on New York stock Exchange with one of the biggest prices per share ever, 68 dollars. (Krantz 2014.) On the other side, there are also a massive amount of small-time businesses, varying from clothing to hand made jewellery and anything else on the earth, that are founded by people who could have not been able to start their businesses without the possibility to utilize now easily available, and often inexpensive ecommerce platforms.

I got interested in this subject, while working as a graphic designer I have had the possibility to work in the forefront of ecommerce and see how many businesses, from very different lines of industry, even after fretting the whole idea for years, have finally jumped on to the bandwagon and gone to establish their own ecommerce spaces. I used the word space deliberately, since the word describes the biggest challenge for us designers; instead of designing individual products, packaging or signage seen in a physical entity, we are all of a sudden in control of the design of the whole store. Graphic designer is among user experience designers and web developers the one, who is now in charge of the whole shopping experience, the architects of a virtual ensemble, as we can put it. Luckily my own interests rose when the whole ecommerce trend was heating up and a lot of interesting studies and articles targeting the ecommerce field were published.

Personally, I see creating an ecommerce website as a challenge that enables the designer of a site to really show their professional skills in various fields; user experience, information architecture, knowledge of the latest technical developments in the field of web design, understanding of the consumer behaviour, psychology, as well as ability to design for a multilingual and -cultural customer base. There is also the business side of things; the ecommerce site is ultimately build to make profit, so the designer has to make a lot of decisions based on what would be the most financially rational scenario.

In my thesis I will examine multiple studies in the field and refine them into a comprehensive guide on best possible shopping experience. I will mainly be studying the fashion vertical as I am personally interested in fashion industry and the new challenges that lie ahead as the clothes are no longer tangible objects that can be touched, explored throughout and tried on before making the decision whether to purchase or not.

Visualizing the clothes in a way that the customer is ready to order although one's only seen the visual representation of the product is truly a challenge. The other obstacle is ensuring that the customer will receive personalized recommendations and quality customer service, although no face-to-face interaction is present. From the merchant's perspective, placing the items in the virtual shopping cart is not a final decision to purchase either, as shopping carts are easily abandoned during the checkout process if the customer finds it too difficult, not trustworthy or otherwise too much trouble to go through.

I will study three most common topic areas that should be studied before launching an online clothing business: the user, the medium and the content.

First and foremost, the defining of the target users and their goals is essential. If this part ignored, there is a possibility that even if the store is executed professionally and the technology of the page, as well as the layout design are top notch, the site fails to communicate with its target audience and thus never reaches the potential financial gain that is expected from it.

I will also be digging deeper in to the actual medium, all the different displays from the tiny mobile devices to large personal computers and how to design an ecommerce website that is responsive and easy to use with all the different screen sizes. I will study how

mobile has changed the ecommerce world and how to design ecommerce sites with multiple different views to serve a wide variety of users on multiple devices.

Last but not least, I will explain why storytelling and quality content have a massive effect on the profitability of the e-store's success. I will study what kind of content is not only effective in terms of converting visitors into customers, but also something, that the reader's feel like has actual value to them. When creating content to an e-store, there is a distinct difference between over-selling one's own products and creating something that will affect the whole brand image in a positive way. Sometimes, it is not easy to distinguish, but it helps a lot to analyse the stores that have mastered the content creation process.

My goal is to write a comprehensive guide to anyone designing ecommerce websites. I hope that this thesis will help them to create the best possible shopping experience by gaining a deep understanding of the most important factors of ecommerce.

## 2 THE USER

”It is not enough to be the first to market with a blue circle arc and an online shopping cart. Now it's necessary to have a product that is actually desired by people and fulfills their needs”, states Mike Kuniavsky in the first chapter of his book on user experience fundamentals (Kuniavsky 2013, 3). If the user is completely ignored in the development face of an ecommerce website, there is a serious possibility that some usability issues are totally bypassed and the emphasis is on the things that are totally irrelevant for the end user. This is why it is fatal to begin the design process by defining the target group. The merchant must make sure, that the user is able to achieve the goals needed to become a paying customer. Conversion is a term that is used heavily in ecommerce world, to describe the point where the visitor becomes a paying customer. Increasing the conversion rates is usually one the most important challenges any online store has to tackle to be able to stay afloat in the competitive domain of ecommerce.

In his book, *Differentiate or die*, the author John Wiley (2008, 5-8) explains how easy it is to lose a customer by offering too much for a too wide an audience. If the management thinks that their company does not need a target group, in order to gain as wide audience as possible, they most likely are on the wrong tracks. It is rarely possible to design a product that appeals to everyone and be successful. ”Differentiation often requires sacrifice”, the book points out. By developing a strong brand, a company will gain customers but obviously also lose some as it is not possible to everyone’s number one choice. This is also very true for a successful online clothing store. The product has to have a target audience that is studied and observed in all the stages of the design process.

The shopping experience of today is all about the personalization, rich content and finding the right channels to communicate with the target group. The more the developer of the website knows about the target visitors of the site and how they behave both online and in their everyday lives, the easier it is to design an appealing web site for them.

## 2.1 The Stages of the Usage Lifecycle

A long-time interface and product designer Joshua Porter introduced the usage lifecycle in his blog in 2008. Since then this concept has been introduced in many publications concerning the customer relations. While interacting with any service or product, the users go through series of steps called the Usage Lifecycle. Each of these steps are different for varying consumer types and each poses different design challenges. When designing for a visitor in an ecommerce site, these steps are a good foundation to start understanding the customer. Here is an overview of the Usage Lifecycle:

**First contact:** Person becomes aware of the website. This is when the person becomes interested in the store and its products. This is where their perceptions are formed: Does the visitor understand what your design is all about? Does the visitor understand what use it is to them?

**First time use:** Probably the most critical moment in the lifecycle of the design. It's the first real impression, the first actual use of the store. Depending on the outcome the user might abandon the site or consider a long time engagement.

**Ongoing Use:** At this stage the user visits the site regularly and has even purchased products from time to time.

**Passionate Use:** This is the stage, where the customer is highly involved with the site and even contributing to the success of the site by recommending it for the others. Most of the sites never attain this kind of customer loyalty but if they do, it is one of the most valuable resources for the organic growth of the clientele.

**Death:** There are many possible reasons why people quit visiting the site. Maybe the design of the page was outdated. Maybe the check-out process was too complicated. Maybe some other site found a better way to communicate with the clients. It is always important to analyse what went wrong for not repeating the same mistakes all over again. (Porter 2008)

For an ecommerce company, it truly is challenging to form a satisfying relationship with the customers especially when there is no face-to-face interaction of traditional brick-and-mortar businesses. People tend to behave differently online than offline and different groups of people have varying motivations for buying from a certain e-retailer (Chaffey 2009, 135). A throughout knowledge about what goes on in the mind of the e-



customers is essential for sustaining a clientele that is drawn to visit the site and buy the products time and time again.

## 2.2 Introducing the e-customers



PICTURE 1. Commerce sciences has divided the e-customers in four different categories; safety concerned, socially influenced, informative and risk-averse shoppers (Commerce Sciences 2014, modified). From these categorisations I created a graph illustrating the kind of concerns these different groups of people might have while shopping online.

E-businesses have very little boundaries geographically or culturally, which is a huge advantage compared to traditional businesses. The downside is, that if the service provider ignores to find out about the people hiding behind the IP addresses, that may cause difficulties in forming an engaging relationship with them. (Chaffey 2009, 133). Software is not a replacement for 'humanware', states Dave Chaffey in his book E-business and Ecommerce management: "Some remote customer service contacts will always require personal, human interaction rather than automated electronic responses." (Chaffey 2011, 538.)

”Online customers are changing. Not only do they talk back they now shout back and even bite back if brands break their promises.” asserts Chaffey, pointing to the rise of social media and the fact that consumers are eager to share their experiences with other potential clients on the internet. More than ever, the customers are taking an active part in communicating with the brands and services. (Chaffey 2011, 34.) They are willing to create content and form an interactive relationship that is supposed to re-shape the business as an iterative process. This is why it is vital to any modern brand e-businesses included to listen to both, the positive and negative feedback of their customers and maintain a dialogue with them, also through multiple social media channels.

Although the clientele can be widely spread across the world, the internet enables the communication across the borders and finding like-minded groups to share common interests with. This is creating an opportunity to an e-retailer to make profit with more niche products that would not gain prosperity locally. (Chaffey 2011, 134.) For example, a middle sized city in Finland most likely does not have enough citizens interested in dressing up in an alternative or gothic fashion but instead, there is a wide community worldwide that can be reached online with appropriate targeting techniques.

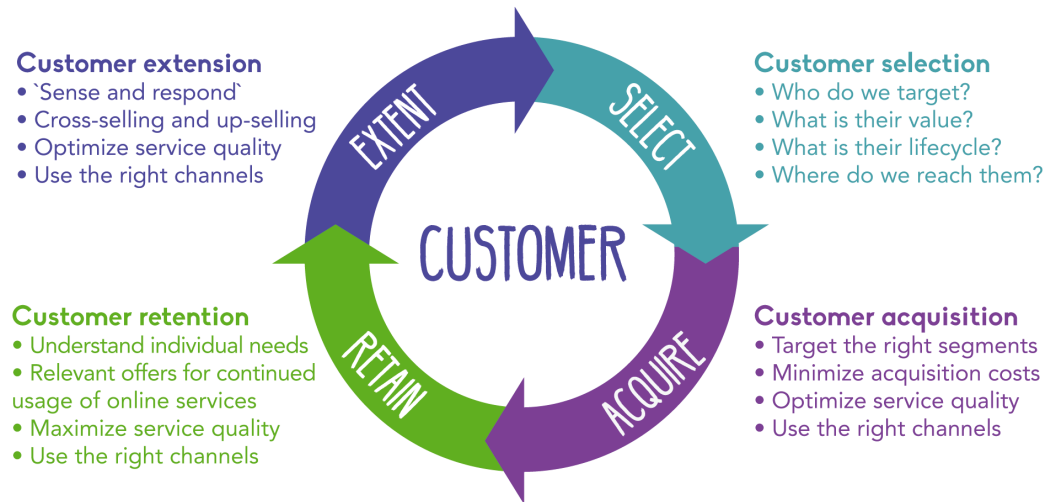
Another highly valued concept in e-business is privacy and trust. A modern-day consumer is aware of the concerning intrusive actions against their privacy and personal space (Chaffey 2011, 135). Shopping on the internet demand the customer’s full trust as one is giving away personal information when registering as a customer or placing an order, and this information is not to be misused or admitted to a third party.

In the next chapter I will explain further how attract the members of the intended target audience and how to maintain an ongoing relationship with them.

### **2.2.1 Customer segmentation**

Market segmentation is the process of dividing a target market into smaller segments of consumers who share common needs, interests and priorities and then creating a strategy to target them (Kotler & Lane 2015, 26). This means identifying the customer base that is targeted during the launch, retention and extension. One must study how the tar-

geted people behave online and in what kind of communities they belong to and from what channels they acquire information from.



PICTURE 2. Four marketing activities of customer relationship marketing (Chaffey 2009, 155, modified).

Part of the customer selection process is also to understand that not everyone is an ideal customer. “Research suggests that your best 20% customers generate 140% of your profits” argues Chaffey (2009, 157). The ideal customer is not only a financial asset to the e-retailer but also beneficial in attaining a larger clientele as they often refer the site to the other members of their social network and other communities both on- and off-line. In a study conducted by IBM and Econsultancy, 64% of marketers strongly agreed that identifying the customers with the highest value is vital to their growth. Still, most of them are unable to focus their marketing efforts to these customers. “For online marketing, the trick is determining who they are and how, where, and what they buy”, reports Ken Bisconti on IBM Commerce blog (2015).

After the customer selection one must be able to communicate and advertise the store to the desired customer’s segments and build a relationship with them. “All marketers know that building a long-term relationship with the ‘ideal customer’ is essential for any sustainable business”, argues Chaffey and continues by explaining that by retaining 5 percent more customers, e-companies can boost their profits up to 95 percent. (2009, 159). This clearly shows the importance of targeting the right customers that will potentially grow into a loyal customer base.

As acquiring new customers is substantially 20-30% more expensive than traditional businesses, it makes a lot of sense to build a lasting relationship with existing customers. In ecommerce, customer loyalty is an extremely valuable asset. The evidence indicates that the online customers tend to consolidate their shopping with one primary supplier, even making the purchasing from the supplier's site part of their daily routine. (Reichheld & Schefter 2000.)

### **2.3 User profiles**

I've already described some generic facts about a modern e-customer, based on the literature and studies made about the subject. This information is nowhere near as specific as an e-business really needs to acquire a loyal clientele. To be able to use the right tools in targeting the right segments one must get to know the customer as throughoutly as possible.

Mike Kuniavsky describes multiple methods for customer profiling that are beneficial for e-businesses as well. One way to gain more insight about the potential customer is building user profiles. By creating a profile of a typical user one can gain more understanding on the potential customers' true motivations, where they search for information, what social media channels they use and who are the major influencers within the communities they belong to. "A set of carefully constructed user profiles can help you understand why you're making what you're making and why people are going to buy it" explains Kuniavsky. (2003, 131.)

User profiles are most beneficial when they are done at the beginning of the project. Creating a user profile will require five to eight stakeholders that will all participate by bringing different information to the profile and also a different perspective. The creation of the profiles starts by researching the target audience. The most simply and easy way to begin the research is by interviewing the people who have direct experience with the target audience and asking them about their interactions with the target group, what kind of people they are and what do they do and what are their common problems. It is likely that different interviewees give different and even conflicting answers but this is totally normal and not to be resolved at this point. (Kuniavsky 2003, 131-132.)

Now that one has a rough understanding on what kind of people belong to the target group, the next step is to find the people who represent this group. Kuniavsky encourages to ask these people how they currently do things that the product is supposed to assist them with and enquire them about the problems they have had as well as the positive experiences. (Kuniavsky 2003, 134-135.)

Only after the research part it is time to start crafting the profiles. They should preferably be made in one day so that the process and information is coherent and freshly on the minds of the part-takers. Firstly, the participants will write down attributes that they think describe the target user. At this point the descriptions can be almost everything, going far and wide and include gut feelings on top of the actual research resolutions. According to Kuniavsky, the list of attributes is not supposed to be a checklist or an exhaustive archive of attributes, but it instead meant to serve as seeds to describe the users. (Kuniavsky 2003,136).

Following the attributes the team is then set up to compile more detailed descriptions about the target user. Above is a condensed list of information that should be included in the user profile.

### **2.3.1 Demographic**

Demographic descriptions divide the target audience with traditional measurable values such as age, gender, income and purchasing power, cultural restrictions and job title. (Kuniavsky 2003, 136). Examining these values more closely, there are certain aspects that need to be considered carefully, in an ecommerce environment. For example the age; if the target customer of the e-business is too young to own a credit card, the one actually making the purchase are usually the parents. They are usually more concerned about the safety of the transaction and the reliability of the business than their children. As they are the ones making the final decision if they are ready to purchase from a website or not, they should be taken into account along with the younger target group.

Secondly; although a customer of e-business can basically be located anywhere in the world, the location of the customer is still valuable information. While it might make a lot of sense to promote winter clothing to Finnish customers in January, the same offer

might cause chuckles to a customer viewing the page in Australia. One has to think about the language selection and localization options for the page. Nowadays it is possible for a website to locate the IP address automatically and redirect the user to the local version of the international site. Another widely used option is a landing page listing links to the localized websites, from which the customer may select. The localized version uses the local language and currency and can display ads or offers that are specific to a certain country or another geographical area. If the online store operates in many countries and cultures, there are certain cultural precautions too. This is one of the reasons why to create these localized entities: to fit the local culture and environment better.

### **2.3.2 Technological**

Technological descriptions exhibit how tech-savvy the target user is and what are the possible key constraints on the way the product is used. This part is to be studied extremely carefully when designing an e-business as the store has to be accessible to the potential customers. I will go deep into these technical requirements in the next chapter, but here are the keywords by Kuniavsky, including my commentary from the commerce perspective:

Computer - what kind of computer does the typical user have? (Kuniavsky 2003, 137.) I would argue, that the brand of the computer does not really matter that much anymore, but the device used for browsing the site. Nowadays when people are accessing internet with their smart phones and tablet it is critical to make the website optimised for them. I will write a lot more about this in the next chapter.

One must also remember that people use these devices differently, a research made by IBM Commerce Hub in 2014 suggests that while the smart phones drove a lot of traffic to ecommerce sites, more purchases were made with a tablet and desk top computers. Tablets drove 12.9% of online sales compared to 9.1% for smart phones and tablet users also spent 22% more per order than the ones using smart phones. Desktop PCs accounted for 58.6% of all online traffic and 78% of all online sales. They also spent nearly 16% more per order. (Winans 2014.)

Monitor - what kind of monitor resolution is accessible by most of the target users? (Kuniavsky 2003, 137.) Nowadays the monitor size is not the problem as much as the fluidity of the devices, like mentioned in the last paragraph.

Net connection - how fast is the bandwidth of the internet? Most mobile devices access the internet via wireless mobile internet services that generally have a vastly varying coverage in different places. (Kuniavsky 2003, 137.) This is one of the reasons why it is not smart to include large images or video files to the mobile optimised website; the page would simply load for too long or even not load at all.

Experience - how experienced is the user with the hardware and how comfortable are they using the technology in general? The more familiar the user is with the technology, the less fears one has concerning purchasing online. (Kuniavsky 2003, 138.) The phobias of the consumer must be taken seriously, even if some of them are not rational. One can fight these phobias providing clear and effective privacy statements and by designing an easy-to use, customer centric website that is effortless to use, and thus enables the customer to become comfortable with it. (Chaffey 2009, 150.)

### **2.3.3 Environment**

The environment gives context to where and for how long the product is used. (Kuniavsky 2003, 138-9.) For example, a business selling clothing for small children might benefit from knowing how much time the busy parents actually have time to scroll through the stock and if it is more convenient for them to browse the site with their mobile phone while they are constantly on the move with the children.

### **2.3.4 Lifestyle/Psychographic**

Although the lifestyle of the user is outside the immediate sphere of use, it still matters when thinking how they use the product. This category contains data about the user's values and attitudes, use of media and activities. Roles, for example professional title, are more important when targeting a business or an organization instead of singular users. In bigger organizations the target market and user market may diverge, meaning

that the target markets consist of people who make the purchasing decisions and the user markets consist of people who have to live with these choices. This category also explains the short- and long term goals of the target user giving an explanation of why people would initially use the product; it must help them to achieve some kind of goal. (Kuniavsky 2003, 139-140.)

Needs can be divided in two different subcategories: the ones that are expressions of goals and the ones that don't have a direct relation with the functionality of the product but more emotional and personal needs, answering the questions: What has to happen for the problem to be solved? What does the target user need to enjoy using the product? Why is the person using this product? (Kuniavsky 2003, 141.)

Desires are not the same thing as needs since desires are more subjective. The user's desires might not have an effect on the product becoming more effective but instead they make the use of the product more satisfying. Sometimes the user has difficulties vocalizing their real desires. This knowledge gives context to why the user would choose one product over the other. It maps how much the user knows about the product and how much one is willing to spend time exploring the other options at hand. (Kuniavsky 2003, 141-142.)

### **2.3.5 Compiling the user profiles**

The user profile should include a list of the most important tasks that one is going to do with the product or service. The tasks should be seen from the perspective of the user, as in, what kind of actions must be done to achieve the goal?

Once this huge list of attributes is compiled, Kuniavsky suggests sorting them into separate clusters with the rest of the team. As everyone has their own list of attributes, they should be grouped together so that they are in relation to the other team-member's attributes. This part takes a lot of time as the team must discuss and agree on the major clusters. There is probably going to be a lot of variety in the profiles of different people but at this point it is only an advantage as "-- the ultimate goal is to create a set of profi-

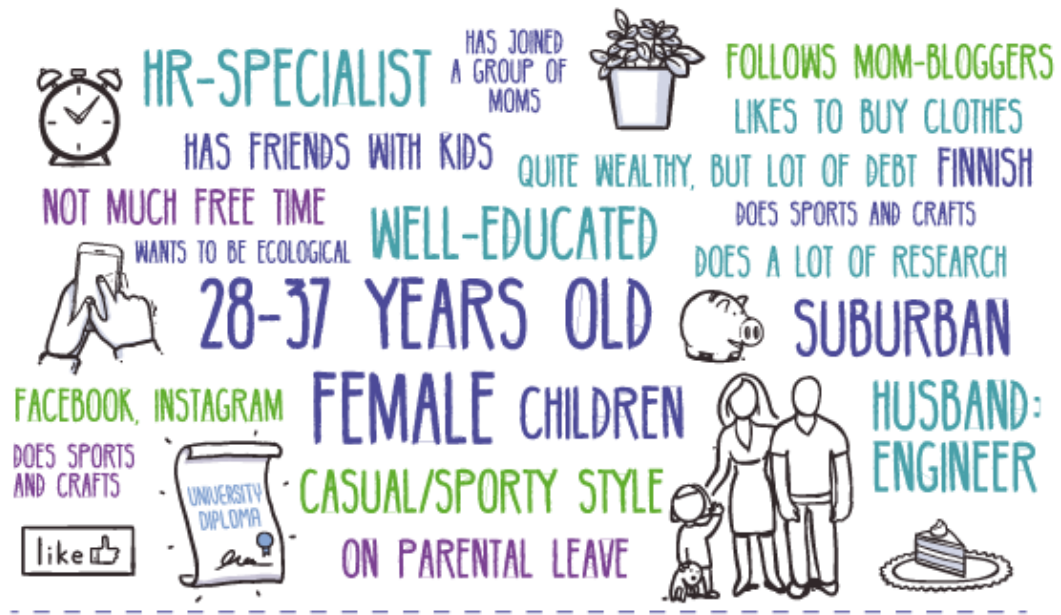


les that will not just show the breath of potential users, but that will exercise the most important product functions”, Kuniavsky reasons. (2003, 143-145.)

Only now it is the time to start working on the individual profiles. The team must create fictional personas around the clusters (see picture 3). The team can already make conclusions out of the clusters but the personas are the most refined way to get detailed information about the individuals inside the target group. Although fictional, the features that the person possesses must fall into the range of attributes stated in the last part. (Kuniavsky 2003, 146-147.)

Finally, when attributes have fleshed out into personas, the team can create a story of him or her, where all the attributes form a story that emphasizes the challenges, the fears and the goals of the persona when using the product. Introducing different constraints and challenges will change the story and bring out new guidelines for the design. (Kuniavsky 2003, 147-150.)

Last but not least, Kuniavsky reminds, that the personas are most useful when they are constantly updated as the features of the product change drastically or if any other major changes are made. To remain as a part of the design process, the personas must be documented in detail so that it is easy to return to them whenever necessary for the product development. (Kuniavsky 2003, 150.)



NAME: Susanna Lehtonen  
 AGE: 33 years old  
 LIVES IN: Espoo, Finland  
 HUSBAND: Husband Jari Lehtonen (36),  
 IT engineer in a large IT company  
 KIDS: Veli (5), Siiri (2)  
 EDUCATION: University (fM)

**WORKS** as a human resources specialist in a large IT company, currently on parental leave since her second child Siiri was born. Older child Veli goes to the daycare 4 days a week for 5 hours. Susanna met her husband while working as an intern at the company they both still work in.

**LIKES** to be active with the kids, playing outside, going to parks and walks in the nature. She is also part of a group of moms from the same area. Together they arrange playdates for the kids and talk about family, relationships and work. Susanna likes to dress up her kids whenever they leave home for these activities.

**SHE APPRECIATES** good quality clothes that are more unique than what local stores can provide. She finds new interesting webshops via blogs, forums and recommendations from friends. She is also willing to spend more on clothes that are ethically made of organic materials. Before ordering she researches the clothing companies' social media feeds to find out if other customers have received the order in time and if they have been happy with the product they've received.





PICTURE 3. From attributes to a convincing persona. Persona is a way to get a closer understanding of the people inside the target group. In this succinct example the team has started to develop a persona of Susanna, a typical user of an online store selling children's clothing. (Salminen 2015.)





### 2.3.6 User advocacy and social media

Business strategist Frederick Reichheld has made finding the ideal customers a bit easier by popularizing the NPS. The combination of words stands for 'net promoter score' and it is a measure of customer advocacy. According to Reichheld, the ultimate question to ask from the client is: "Would you recommend it?". The clientele is then asked to answer the question on a scale between 0 (not all likely) and 10 (extremely likely). After the survey the clientele can be divided on three categories, promoters (9-10), passives (7-8) and detractors (under 7). The promoters are a group that are inevitably important to any business as the personal recommendations are the second most appreciated information source after search engines (Reichheld 2006, 495-6.)

Reichheld has also made a list of actions that will facilitate the promoter-group's online advocacy that is also highly relevant to any e-business. Firstly, the page template contains 'forward/recommend to a friend' options. (Reichheld 2006, 498.) With the massive growth of social media platforms, the first part alone has changed to be a lot more complicated set of decisions. Many templates already include a set of social media sharing buttons that can be added to the page or the feature can easily be programmed to any page. A simple Google search for 'social media buttons' reveals that there are a massive amount of icons reaching from simple round buttons to almost any visual style, and pre-written code to make them active on a website.

The detailed examination of the target users discussed in previous chapter becomes useful when one must decide which share buttons to include to the website. Many times the social media icons on the main page are links to the social media profiles of the e-business and the actual recommendation buttons can be found on the product page. This placement might be due to the fact that there is little point in sharing the entire webpage, as the customers are more likely to recommend or share a single item they have liked. A good way to get an idea which buttons to include and where is by benchmarking e-stores that are targeting a similar target audience as the site one is developing. As an example, below is an analysis on six popular e-stores targeted for young adults (see picture 4). I chose young adults as the main target group because this group of clients is usually the first to adopt new platforms as well as being prominent users of social media.

WEBSITE					SOMETHING ELSE, WHAT?
ASOS	●	●	●	●	
NELLY	●	●	●		SHARE VIA EMAIL, BLOG AND VIDEO BLOG
JUNKYARD	●		●		
WAREHOUSE	●	●	●	●	
LOVECULTURE	●	●	●		INSTAGRAM
BOOHOO	●	●	●	●	VANELO (WANT - NEED - LOVE -APP)

Websites visited: [www.asos.com](http://www.asos.com) - [www.nelly.com](http://www.nelly.com) - [www.junkyard.fi](http://www.junkyard.fi)  
[www.warehouse.co.uk](http://www.warehouse.co.uk) - [www.loveculture.com](http://www.loveculture.com) - [www.boohoo.com](http://www.boohoo.com)

PICTURE 4. Social media sharing buttons enable the promoters' online advocacy and generate traffic to the website.

A quick study (see picture 7) comes to show that as one might assume, Facebook share can be found from all of these websites as the first option. With almost a billion active users daily (Facebook 2015), it is the most dominant social media in many countries. Sharing on Facebook definitely brings visibility but thinking about the amount of ads, memes and spam on people's newsfeed a single post can easily be lost in the noise. It might be far more effective for the businesses to also invest in Facebook advertisements.

Facebook offers multiple tools for the advertisers to reach the right group of people through demographic targeting and Lookalike audiences. Demographic targeting means selecting the people, to whom the ad will be shown by manually defining the location, age range, interests. Very recently Facebook has also added Lookalike targeting to their features. This means that rather than selecting the demographics of the audience manually, Facebook algorithms determine it by selecting people who are similar to, or “look alike”, the people who are already customers of a particular store. (Facebook 2016.)

Pinterest is a popular channel to share the outfits as well. Simply put, Pinterest is a large feed of images that the user can sort into categories, or 'boards', such as home decor, fashion, animals, drawings etc., where user can store images and source links attached to them. Best case scenario, sharing an outfit photo from an ecommerce site leads to other Pinterest users to tag it in their boards created for future purchases, simultaneously enabling, that a larger amount of other users will see and save the image as well.

Micro-blogging site Twitter seems also to be popular tools to attract advocates, although, for example, in Finland, Twitter can still be viewed as a rather small medium. According to Adweek's online blog, in 2014, only 5% of the Finnish people used Twitter in Finland, compared to the whopping 82% using Facebook (Bennett 2014). This might lead many local e-entrepreneurs to think it is useless to include the Twitter share button on their sites. The situation is totally different when looking at the international statistics, as Twitter has 320 million active users monthly (Twitter.com/fi 2015). On top of that, Adweek, a magazine and website that covers news about media, has pulled statistics that may intrigue many e-entrepreneurs to vendor toward Twitter even more. According to Adweek, 33% of the users follow a brand and from those people, 67% are more likely to buy from a brand they follow on Twitter and on top of that, 79% of the users are more likely to recommend the brands they follow. (Bennett 2013.)

## **2.4 Personalized ecommerce**

As the competition grows, the need for personalized ecommerce experience becomes more demanding. Using smart personalization techniques, the e-business can increase conversions, make more profit and increase engagement, and it is a field that is growing fast as new businesses keep offering new personalization solutions promising better results.

Personalization is a way to collect behavioural data of the user and based on that, produce personalized recommendations that are highly relevant to this specific person. Strategically, personalization means abandoning the "one size fits all" -philosophy and trying to captivate the visitors by interacting with them and offering valuable, thoughtful information to them. According to Forrester study, 52 % of the people who experienced personalization, preferred it (Leggett 2013). As the algorithms driving the per-

sonalization keeps getting better, it can be predicted, that the customer will also start to appreciate it and engage more with the e-businesses that will be able to offer a personalized shopping experience.

### **2.4.1 On-site recommendations**

These recommendations are great way to introduce the first-time visitor the stock. This is often done by displaying products, that are the most popular, recently added or on sale, on the main page of the shop. By utilising these product lists, the store can introduce the offering to the visitors in an interesting way. The top lists are especially important to the fashion related e-stores because opposed to for example electronic stores, the purchasing decisions in fashion, often occur at the spur of the moment. The fashion market is also seasonal in nature, meaning that the turnover rate is usually high. (Coltman 2015, 6-7.)

Other than the main page product lists, there are multiple ways to enrich the customer's journey with recommendations. For example, a fashion online store, Asos, has two different sets of recommendations on the product page viewing an individual product. Firstly, below the product the customer has selected, there is a gallery of items with the title: "You might also like", offering other options that are stylistically similar or belong to the same sub-category or are complementary to the viewed item. For instance, as I selected the product page of simple canvas shoes, the site recommended me the same kind of shoes with different pattern or colour and additionally total of four different kinds of insoles. This is intelligent cross-selling that is both profitable for the merchant and beneficial to the customer, since it is rarely the first product that the customer picks up, that they actually end up buying.

Another recommendation method that is utilized by Asos, is the possibility to "shop the look", as in other clothes and accessories that together with the selected item create a stylistic ensemble. To go with the tie-dyed kimono, the site recommended additional three items: pair of shorts, a top and a ring. Usually, in a fashion store, the models on a product page are not only wearing the one item selected but an ensemble consisting of multiple items sold in the store. Asos has found a smart way to take advantage of the product photos in cross-selling.

Recommendations that are based on individual user's browsing history are useful when a customer is navigating back and forth interesting items as a visual breadcrumb trail that helps the customer navigate on the site (Coltman 2015).

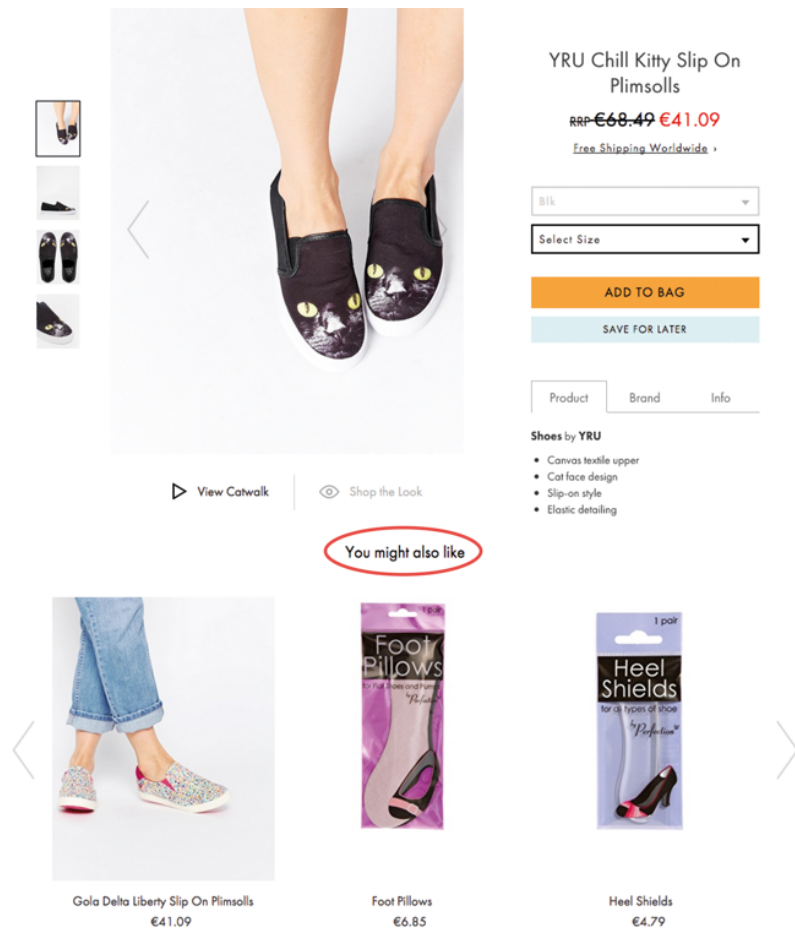


IMAGE 1. Recommending other products that are related to the one displayed on the product page might make the search for the right item easier. (Screenshot: asos.com)

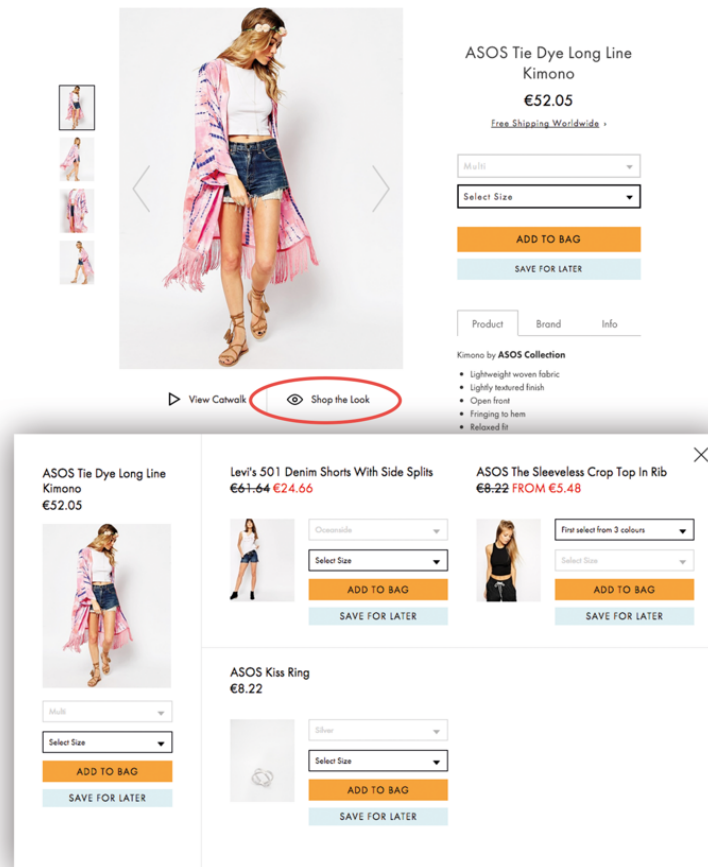


IMAGE 2. Recommending complementary products enables cross-selling. (Screenshot: asos.com)

## 2.4.2 Geotargeting

Using geotargeting, the e-business can deliver different content based on the data of the customer's city, country, IP address or some other criteria (Haußmann 2015). If the business has physical stores in addition of the e-store, they can offer the customer a free pick up on a location nearby. This is an efficient way to connect the in-store and online customer experience as the website serves as a showroom for the store and makes the shopping experience effortless but at the same time fulfilling their immediate need as they can pick up the item right away and avoid shipping costs (Girish 2015).

Even if the business operates solely online, there are some exciting geotargeting possibilities available. A fresh example was a campaign of Burton, a company that has de-



veloped from selling snowboarding gear to a lifestyle brand. They wanted an uplift to their conversion rates using a personalization strategy based on the visitor's local weather. They received an 11.6 % uplift by programming the landing page to adapt according to the weather conditions of the customer and showing the relevant products to buy. (Qubit - Weather targeting and visitor history personalization.)

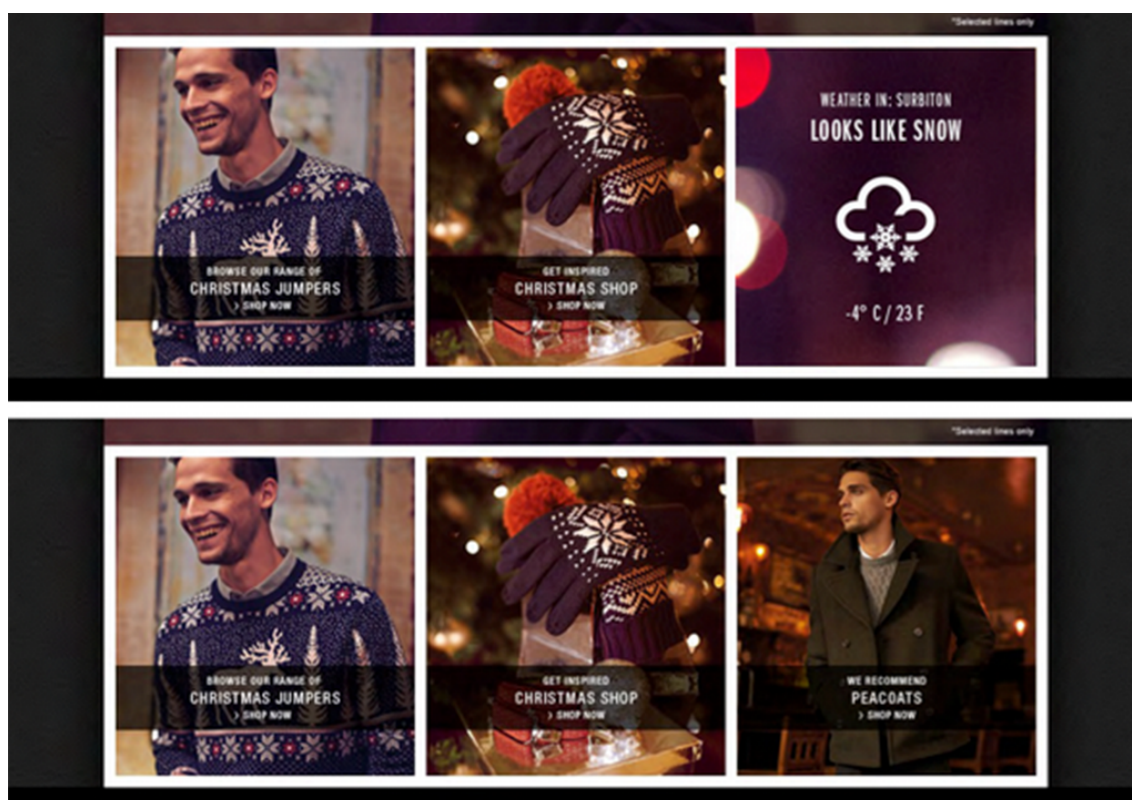


IMAGE 3. Burton's website recommended relevant products based on the visitor's local weather conditions. (Screenshot: burton.com)

Similar to Burton case, when it comes to tracking local weather conditions, an award winning campaign: My home is an oven, executed by Saatchi & Saatchi for BGH's Air conditioning in Argentina. They created a discount system on air condition units based on the time the building was exposed to sunlight, together with Google Maps and the Buenos Aires Ministry of Urban Development. (Best Marketing 2014) Though this example is not of a clothing-related business, the same method could be utilized in an ecommerce business as well. For example, a business selling clothes for winter outdoor activities could offer a discount based on how much snow there is on certain areas. If the campaign was to be executed in wintertime Finland, the country could be separated

on different clusters vertically. Then the website would be programmed to track the occurrence of snowfalls on these areas or the depth of the snow cover on each of the clusters and rate a discount based on the selected metrics.



IMAGE 4. An award-winning campaign of BGH air conditioning encouraged people living in Buenos Aires to find out for how many hours of direct sunlight their home building was being exposed to daily, and offered a discount based on the result. (Screenshot: latinspots.com)

### 2.4.3 Personalized notifications

Interacting with the visitor with personalized messages is an effective way to reduce the amount of people who browse the site, maybe even placing items on the shopping cart planning to buy them, but never actually goes through the purchase process. Finding way to reduce the shopping cart abandonment is a much talked-about subject in the ecommerce world as it is the behaviour issue among the e-customers. According to Baymard Institute's statistics, in 2015 the average shopping cart abandonment rate was 68.53% (2016).

E-stores have started to send messages to the customers to make sure they keep shopping and are motivated to go through the purchasing process. Opening a pop-up window displaying a limited-time offer persuading the customers to complete the purchase as they don't want to miss a deal. One of the most common method is targeting the first-time visitors, the site could show a welcome message that includes an offer to be used the same day, for example a discount code for free shipping.

In 2012, Crew Clothing Co. Gained a 7.4 percent increase in conversion for users on their e-store by using three personalized message layers. The first message encouraged email sign up to increase brand engagement; the second one offered free delivery to encourage repeated purchase; and the third reinforced the promise of customer service. (Qubit 2015). The introduction about the messages does not include, which of the three messages was the most effective but the obvious giveaway was that all three were more effective used together than individually. It might be best to display this kind of separate message layers on different stages of the purchasing process, not just when entering the site for the first time. For instance, even after the first order has been placed, the business could offer a free shipping code that is effective with the next purchase. This way the customer is allured to come and visit the site also in the future.

Systems tracking the movement of the user's mouse also enable accurate and on-time messaging. Using the exit-intent technology the system detects when the visitor is about to leave the page and opens up a pop-up window with the final offer before leaving. A precisely targeted offer it is a great tool in to convincing the visitor to stay on the site. One provider of on-site targeting, Optimonk, reported a case study where in two weeks, a single entrepreneur's sales went up by 30.22 percent and the time spent on the website increased by 35 percent. (Optimonk 2015.) Even though the on-site retargeting is yet missing a comprehensive, objective study to validate the system provider's arguments, if the outcome is anywhere near the numbers given by Optimonk and many other companies providing the same kind of service, it is an exceptionally powerful tool for online businesses.



**BEFORE YOU GO...**  
**CAN WE TEMPT YOU**  
**WITH FREE DELIVERY?**

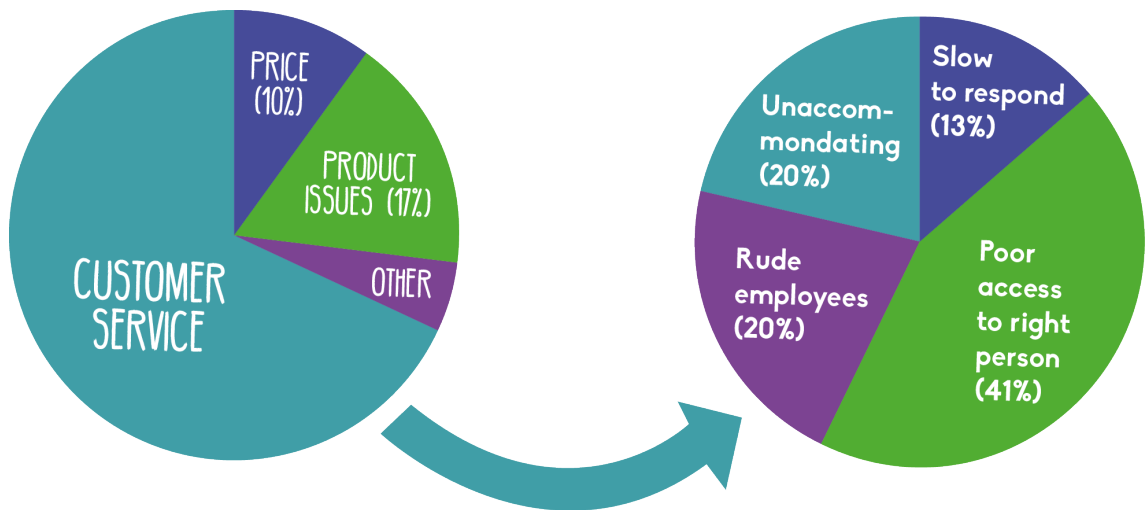
Use the code **'FR33'** now!

IMAGE 5. L.K. Bennett website uses exit-intent retargeting. As the visitor is about to leave the page, the site recognises the mouse movement and opens up pop-up window offering free delivery. (Screenshot: [lkbennett.com](http://lkbennett.com)).

## **2.5 Better customer service**

Customer service is not to be taken lightly when creating an online store. The lack of real human-to-human interaction creates a need for other kind of solutions for keeping the customer satisfied.

In his book, *eMarketing Excellence*, David Chaffey recounts about the customer's expectations: "Online customers have raised expectations. They expect higher standards in terms of service, convenience, speed of delivery, competitive prices and choice. Customers expect customer service throughout the journey, before, during and after the purchase is made. (Chaffey 2009, 146.) This goes to show that absolutely no shortcuts can be taken when customer's expectations are set this high.



GRAPH 1. Reasons why customers change supplier (Chaffey, 2009 146, modified).

In an online store, the usability is the key to a great customer experience. The products need to be found easily by searching or browsing the site and on the product page, the price, the specification information and the availability must be accurate and on-time. The shipping details must also be found easily as well as the instructions for returning the ordered items. (Chaffey 2009, 147.) If the customer still has questions, there has to be an easy channel for one to ask questions. Frequently asked question can be compiled in a FAQ-section on the website but it does not remove a need for proper customer service.

## 2.6 Contact form

Adding a contact form on the website is an effortless way for customers to send their questions to the supplier. In the form, there can also be additional questions that are designed to collect data important to the business, such as: Where did you hear about this site? Would you recommend the site to your friends? What kind of improvements would you suggest for the site? One must still remember that these additional questions are not the main point of the contact form, mere a non-mandatory addition.

The most important thing is to be fast and efficient. The customer will be expecting the answer as fast as possible or else they will be turning to other service providers. The e-business has to make sure that the people answering the customer's question are proper-



ly educated, polite and resourceful to be able to give an answer that satisfies the customer and assures one to continue using the service.

## 2.7 Social media

Nowadays the social media channels are a common way to the customer to contact the supplier. The e-business' Facebook page can be expected to be one of the hub spots of customer interaction. Though there is a possibility to send private messages, many customers leave their question and comments publically so that everyone is able to see and comment on them. This increases the urgency of a prompt and quick answer from the merchants' side as all the other visitors on the site will get an impression on the efficiency of the business' customer service by reading the messages and answers posted. Social media is all about creating an impressive brand image, and the right means of communicating are vital for the business to stay afloat in the competitive world of ecommerce.

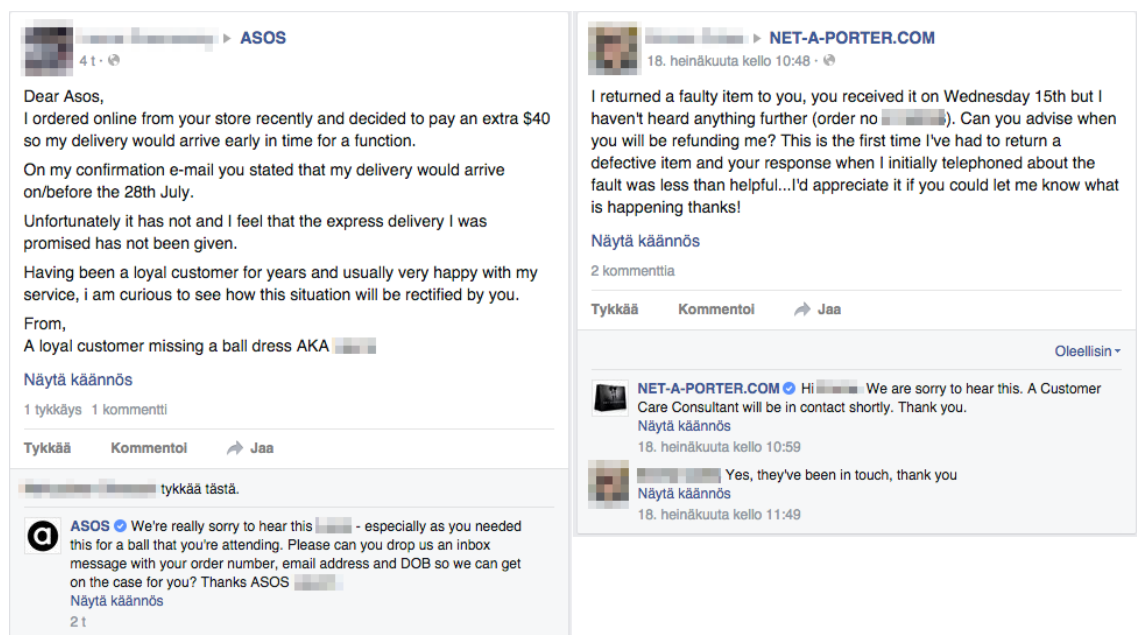


IMAGE 6. On social media, a prompt customer service is the key.

Above (see IMAGE 6) is a screenshot from the Facebook page of Asos and Net-a-porter. In both cases the customer has a complaint, that is answered with a short message conducting the further discussion will be held private. Both of the respondents also address the person who posted the message by their first name. Asos, selling clothing

from the lower price range encourages the writer to contact them so that the issue can be resolved. Net-a-Porter, an e-store for high-end fashion brands, promises to contact the customer shortly, no further questions asked, which is an indication of delicate customer service. There is also a different tone in these two answers. In Asos' case, the respondent always has a name, in this case Lauren, while Net-a-Porter refer to a Customer Care Consultant. Considering the different target groups, it is totally understandable that Asos has a more casual tone while the Net-a-Porter uses more formal manner. These differences in the tone when communicating with the customers have to be thought out carefully. (facebook.com/netaporter, facebook.com/ASOS.)

## **2.8 Live chat**

According to Econsultancy, live chat has the highest satisfaction levels for any customer service channel, with 73%, compared to 61% for email and 44% for phone. Like in other communication channels, the time is the key factor for the customers preferring the live chat option. They are also fond of the fact that they are able to multi-task while using the chat as they don't have to engage in the conversation on the same level than on the phone. Other reasons why the live chat option was preferred is because the customer can feel in control. There are many possibilities for miscommunication and plain awkwardness of the situation when one calls on the phone and many seem to prefer to communicate on written form. (Carlton 2013).

If writing is not convenient for the customer, there are businesses providing a video chat option too. Video chat is probably the closest an ecommerce site can get to the customer service experience one get when visiting a store physically. Needless to say, providing a video chat requires a lot of resources from the company as there has to be a person who is available to concentrate entirely on customer service and preferably more than one if the service is supposed to be available around the clock and if there is a lot of traffic on the site.

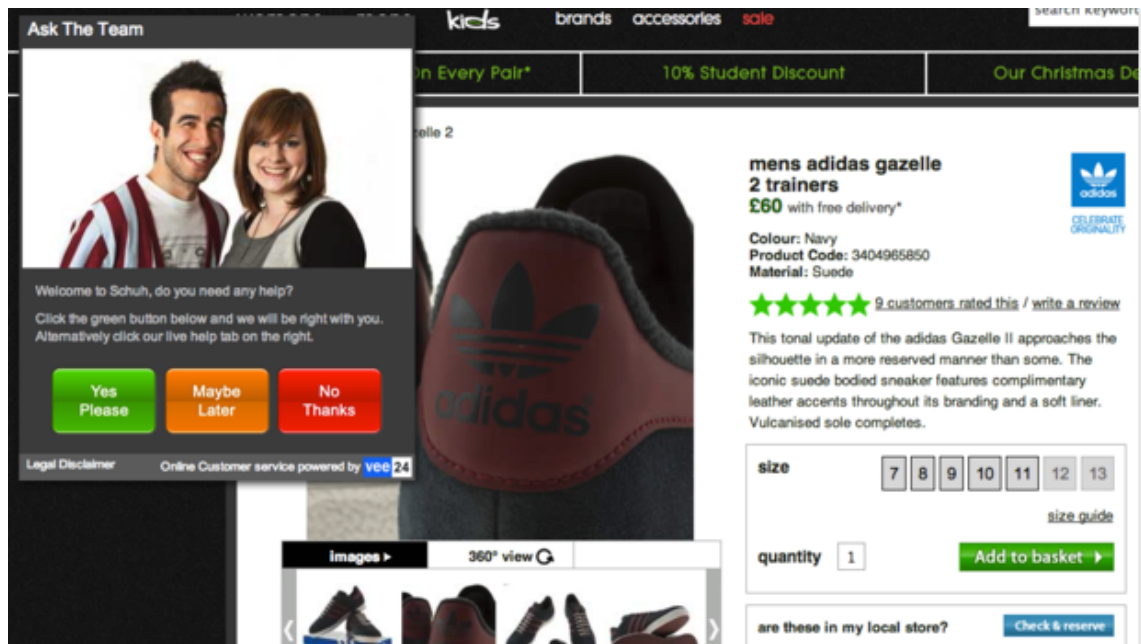


IMAGE 7. Schuh.co.uk offers a live chat option for the customers. (Screenshot: schuh.co.uk).

### 2.8.1 Tracking the results

No matter what customer service practices the company utilizes, the results should always be written down and analysed so that it is possible to aim for even better outcome. The service providers should be aware of the most common problems the customers face whether they just browse the site, search for a certain product or go through the final check out process. One must also track, what channels to get help are most popular amongst their customer segment. Defining and then tracking the events that are crucial to the business and learning how to improve and make these steps more cohesive to the customer ensures that more people go through the ordering process and the shopping cart abandonment rate remains relatively small.

## 2.9 Accessibility

Just like the ground floor stores are setting up wheel chair ramps and modifying their floor plans to serve better the disabled customers, the e-businesses can do their part in



making the world more accessible. There are many groups of people with certain conditions that can, and should, be taken into consideration when designing any website.

Why is accessibility so important to an ecommerce business? The world report on disabilities produced by World Health Organisation and the World Bank (2011, 8-9) states clearly that, although there are vast differences in the demographic of developing versus the developed nations, the median ages are projected to increase markedly in all countries. This development has also been a current topic locally in Finland. "Ageing is a major influence on disability trends", states the report, as there are naturally a higher disability rates among the older generations. At the same time, at least in the developed countries, the older people have the financial stability that makes them an influential group of consumers that are becoming more and more tech-savvy. This is why every e-store that has a target group of elderly people should consider how to make their website more accessible to them.

Even if the target market is not the older generations, there are a considerable amount of people with disabilities almost in every customer segment. According to The world disability report (2011, 9), based on the 2010 population estimates an estimated 16–19% of the world's population is living with a disability. That is from 750 up to 975 million people worldwide.

World Wide Web Consortium (W3C) is a community that develops open standards that ensure the long-term growth of the web. In W3C website, there is a list of accessibility principles that give direction for the designers. Basically, web accessibility relies on several components that work together, the most important ones being:

Web content, meaning any part of the website, including text, images, multimedia content and so forth. User agents, referring to software that people use to access web content. This category includes desktop graphical browsers, voice browsers, mobile phone and tablet browsers, multimedia players, plugins and assistive technologies. Assistive technologies are software that aid people with disabilities use to access the web.

Authoring tools that are the software services that people use to produce content to the web. (Abou-Zahra, Arch et al. 2016)

There are many technologies that can be implemented to the components mentioned above so that people with different disabilities can interact with the web. For example, people who are deaf-blind need a tangible format to understand the content and for them it is necessary to have a refreshable braille display. For the blind there is a device called a screen reader that processes the content on the website and converts it to speech or braille, depending on the device. Content creation that takes into consideration the users of such devices many times helps the overall readability of the site too as the text needs to be well structured and contain simplified summaries and passages to be easily understood. (Abou-Zahra, Arch et al. 2016)

However, not all disabilities are as severe as others and the designer of the website can do a lot to help the people access the site better. The people who have a lowered vision it is necessary to have a proper contrast between the text and the background. Some websites also offer the possibility to change the font size and spacing based on the individual preferences of the visitors. Some people who have neurological problems need to turn off the pop-up windows and flashy ad banners to be able to properly concentrate on the content. People with dyslexia or other learning difficulties might benefit from infographics and symbols instead of text. (Abou-Zahra, Arch et al. 2016)

As a summary, it is wise to think about the possible restrains that people with disabilities might have using the website and think about alternate ways to present the content. Making the website easy for the user to modify offers them the possibility to change the size of text or the colour of the background to improve clarity. I believe that while these actions might make the e-business more profitable, the gain is not only financial. It is everyone's responsibility to make the world and also internet more accessible.

## **2.10 Interview: Lari Lehtonen**

Lari lehtonen is the head of Support at Nosto, a Finnish company that helps retailers online to increase their revenue through personalization. Lehtonen educates the staff of Nosto internally, in addition to helping the clients to achieve better results by sharing his vast knowledge in the field. The interview was conducted face-to-face and was loosely based on the interview questions I had shared with the interviewee beforehand.

### **2.10.1 Different technology, different customers?**

Firstly, I asked about the difference between e-consumers and those who visit the traditional brick-and-mortar stores. Lehtonen pointed out, that dividing the consumers in these two groups might not be the best distinction, since the real goal in all retail should be a consistent customer experience in all channels and environments. Although these channels might vary a lot in the technical sense, the same elements should be in place to make the shopping as coherent and comfortable as possible.

Of course each of the channels have their own advantages and disadvantages that are characteristic to one or the other; ecommerce enables browsing and buying the products anytime, anywhere but getting hold of the actual products is much faster when doing business with bricks-and-mortar stores. Even these lines are getting blurred, as some of the ecommerce giants, such as Amazon, are able to ship the products in record times, sometimes just in four hours from when the order was made. At the same time, the stores with physical business spaces can offer an immediate in-store-pickup to a product purchased online.

Experience shopping was a new interesting term that Lehtonen introduced to describe the future retail. Since the price as a competitive advantage has its limits, in the future, the retailers need to concentrate on the finer nuances of the customer's journey. The stores need to fine-tune their communications with the client, meaning the last emails and messages with the client before receiving the product, and think about the packaging, how the possible courier handles the customers service and so forth. The more money the customer is willing to spend, the better service and more premium packaging is expected.

In ecommerce, one of the reasons why packaging has become essential is the vastly growing trend of unboxing videos and images on social media. In these videos, the customers, usually teenagers or young adults, document meticulously the experience of unboxing their online purchases. Many companies have utilized the trend by including small freebies, such as stickers or posters, or even handwritten personal messages to the recipient to make the unboxing experience a bit more special.

### **2.10.2 Common concerns of online customers**

Next, I wanted to know, what kind of common concerns does an e-customer have in Lehtonen's opinion. He told me, that there are large cultural and regional differences in how the customers experiences an online store's credibility. For example for German consumers, it is often very important, that the store has earned a Trustworthiness Badge that is then displayed on the site as a social proof of the merchant's credibility. In the United States, where credit card frauds are incredibly common, a badge showing that the website has invested in security, is a positive factor for the consumers. Lehtonen mentioned a Norton Security badge, which is amongst the most common ones. According to Symantec, the company behind Norton Security badge is the most trusted mark on the internet, a certificate that shows that the site displaying is a verified and trusted online business. The company also promises daily malware scans to the website and can warn the merchant, if any security risks appear. (Symantec.com, 2013)

Alongside with the social proof and security badges, the actual design of the website has an effect on how many customers feel like the merchant can be trusted. There are clearly a set of quality standards that a more seasoned e-customer thinks about when browsing a site, such as the layout of the page, where the "add to cart" -button is, how the product information is displayed and so forth. These standards are often formed in the websites of the biggest companies on the internet and as the consumers get more used to them, followed by the smaller players in the field. Lehtonen points out that although, for example the European Union has worked on legislation for unifying the rules of the e-marketplace, an even bigger reason behind the design standards is the fact that the consumer has gotten used to certain things that they find trustworthy.

### **2.10.3 Brick-and-mortar is not dead**

It is an established fact, that the ecommerce has permanently changed the landscape of retail, but Lehtonen does not see, that the online stores and bricks-and-mortar stores necessarily have to compete against each other for survival. Lehtonen argues, that in recent years, almost all of the growth in the global marketplace has come from ecommerce, but this does not mean that ecommerce is going to end traditional commerce. In

fact, they will have to learn how to coexist and create value to the consumer, no matter what the channel.

Both of the channels again, have their own unique advantages. A store that exist only as a digital marketplace, can be very agile in its operations, with the only physical location being the warehouse, and even those are often outsourced to other companies. But then again, a countrywide network of stores, that many bricks-and-mortar based companies have already established, is a huge advantage in itself. For these merchants, an online store can also function as a catalogue that introduces the stock, the prices, and availability, even if the final purchase is made in the physical location. Or the other way around, the physical store can function as a showroom, that then encourages the customers to purchase the items online, preferably of course from the e-store managed by the same retailer. Unfortunately, Lehtonen points out, many bricks-and-mortar stores have not realized to utilize this option to cross sell between the digital and physical store and have missed out a great opportunity to grow their market share.

One segment of brick-and-mortar stores that might find it harder to compete in the online marketplace, are large department stores with largely generic selection of products. According to Lehtonen, this is because the internet enables specializing in certain verticals. It is certainly a lot harder to compete with already established retailers selling a vast selection of similar products (for example shoes, home electronics, cosmetics or lingerie) with a more generic offering. Bigger operators also have more volume to buy a larger stock, which is often required by the bigger brands since they may not be willing to make a deal with a merchant that can only buy a marginal amount of products.

Lehtonen sees that in some verticals, the brick-and-mortar stores will be transforming into showrooms, deliberately leading the sales transactions online. He predicts that in the future, there will be less generic clothing stores in the street scene.

#### **2.10.4 Finding the target group online**

In the this section, I've detailed how to create user personas and utilize them in an online store. Talking with Lehtonen, he opens up the possibilities that big data offers to the customer segmentation.

Commonly, explains Lehtonen, an online store has between seven to nine customer segments divided into dozens of micro segments, which is characteristic to ecommerce. When the customer is online, the amount of data captured is huge compared to traditional channels. When utilized right, this data becomes an incredibly valuable tool in all commerce. Where the user personas are basically hypothesis of the ideal customer, tracking the actual users online offers real-time data of the actual people visiting the store. Combining the hypothesis and the data enables to make the user experience along with the marketing efforts even more to-the-point, as again, both of the solutions have their own benefits.

Tracking the user online is already an incredibly sophisticated science, where every action can be captured and analysed. The biggest bottleneck in this technology, in Lehtonen's opinion, is that the collecting a huge amount of data in itself, does not offer any financial gains to the merchants. The data must be utilized correctly in order to make actionable gains, and many time this is a lot harder than it sounds.

Using data capture, for example, the merchants can see from where the visitors have landed to the page in the first place. This helps determining the right marketing channels when acquiring new customers and makes it possible to optimise the targeting as well as possible.

They can also examine, how the existing customers act while browsing the store and try to make the user experience more streamlined in order to minimize the rate of the customers who abandon the store before making the purchase. It is essential that the customer can easily find products they like and that, if they then decide to go through with the purchase, the check-out process is as simple and secure as possible.

### **2.10.5 How to combat buyer's hesitation**

The store might have a great user interface, display personalized content and security certificates, but the customer is still hesitating to make the purchase. How convince her? Lehtonen recounts, that one of the biggest challenges for many stores is to get the visitor to register to the site and simultaneously hand over her contact information. For

many, this is one of the largest steps in becoming a paying customer. Even as though the visitor wouldn't buy anything the first time, the merchant now has the utilities for re-targeting the visitor, for example via email newsletters, and off-site display advertising. I concluded, that in many ways registering for an ecommerce site reminds of the regular customer programmes of many brick-and-mortar chains, since it ensures a continuing relationship with the client.

Social proof is also really important factor in rotting out the buyer's hesitation. People are eager to share their experiences about online services and products they have received and often the feedback then reaches the potential new customers with a substantial effect on the purchase decision. I mentioned different rating systems and product reviews to Lehtonen, and while he agreed that they have an influence on the potential customer, he noted that there are substantial disparities in different fields. Fashion, for example, is a field with such a huge turnover rate, that a certain piece of clothing might be already out of stock before it has received any reviews. In his opinion, a store that might greatly benefit from the reviews, might be a site selling for example home appliances. The turnover is not nearly as high and because of the larger prize and usually longer life span, people want to research the reviews before buying the device.

However, Lehtonen does not think that product reviews are the most effective way to deliver social proof. Nowadays, popular bloggers, vloggers and for example Instagrammers, have gained such a wide audience and following, that they have become powerful influencers of people's consumer choices. Selecting the influencer's that will have the greatest effect on the store's revenue is a difficult task, but well worth it in the long run.

All in all, the interview with Lari Lehtonen was an eye-opening experience in many ways as he had a unique point of view formed by the years of working experience and interest in the field. I would say, that the main giveaway from this interview was the fact that there is no reason to describe ecommerce and brick-and-mortar as the polar opposites, when they actually are "the two sides of the coin", so to speak. Instead of competing against each other, they can enhance each other as both have their own strengths. The technology is different but in both cases, the most important – the customer, is the same.

### **3 UNDERSTANDING THE MEDIUM**

#### **3.1 An introduction to responsiveness**

According to author Damian Ryan (2014), who has published multiple books on digital marketing, in 2014 there is approximately over 2,5 billion internet users worldwide, meaning over a third of the population of the world. (Ryan 2014.) This means tens of thousands of different displays from tiny smart phones to huge computer screens, dozens of browsers with varying qualities. When designing an ecommerce website, one must take into account, that there is not a one single medium to design for, but a bunch of different devices as well as ways to browse the site. In the next chapters my aim is to explain the concept of responsive web design in a manner that is understandable for even those who are not professional in programming websites.

#### **3.2 Use of different devices**

An IBM Digital Analytics Benchmark Hub is a website offering real-time cloud-based retail data and analysis for people interested in the development of online commerce. Since early October through Christmas, IBM Digital Analytics Benchmark began tracking and reporting real-time online holiday shopping key indicators. The data gathered is mostly from the United States but gives a decent image on where the global ecommerce is heading to.

On December 15th, 2014 Maria Winans (2014) shared his insight on the website blog about the direction in which the online retail is heading to, based on the data collected by IBM in 2014. Winans states that the mobile traffic has continued to grow considerably:

“For the first time, mobile devices drove more than half of Thanksgiving online traffic. -- Clearly, there’s opportunity to engage effectively via mobile to differentiate and establish loyalty. Not every business is doing it, or doing it right...yet. However, this capability will transition from differentiation to expectation, so 2015 is prime time to initiate and implement a winning mobile strategy.”

Winans’ next big revelation is, that although traffic from smart phones is up; the majority of sales are still made with tablets or personal computers. She talks about the fluidity



of interactions across different mediums making the understanding the customers challenging but also as an opportunity. One can use the customer insights to deliver a personalised experience that engages customers across channels while simultaneously increasing conversion and driving the revenue. (Winans 2014.)

As the way people browse in the internet is scattered because of the multiple options available: smart televisions, PC's, tablets, phablets, mini tablets, smart phones, et cetera. It has become increasingly important to design the sites so that they can be viewed with as many devices and screen resolutions as technically possible. This is why the any e-retailer must have profound knowledge about the responsive web design.

### **3.3 Important terms**

Responsive web design aims for an optimal viewing experience, no matter what kind of a display is in use. The website has to be supported with multiple browsers, meaning that the website looks and works just as efficiently, whether it is used with a desktop computer or a smart phone with a tiny screen. The most important concepts in making a website mobile friendly are either building a fluid layout or by adjusting the existing desktop version so that it can be easily viewed with a mobile phone or a tablet. (Google Webmaster Central 2012.) In a fluid website layout the majority of the components in have percentage widths, and thus adjust to the user's screen resolution (Knight 2009).

Adaptive layout is a term that emerged even before the launch of liquid layout, and it is still used in many companies wanting to target the mobile users (Marcotte 2010). This means designing a specific site for mobile users, efficient in targeting a specific hardware, such as iPhone 4 or Samsung galaxy mini, and so forth. The problem with this approach is the fact that the list of different screen resolutions and browsers used is huge and growing all the time. (Google Webmaster Central 2012.)

A web article, published in 2010 by Ethan Marcotte, described responsive web design as the future of web design. Rather than tailoring disconnected designs to each of an ever-increasing number of web devices, we can aim for a better user experience no matter what the resolution. (Marcotte 2010.)

### 3.4 The language of responsiveness

First and foremost; the base of every website is html, that stands for Hypertext Markup Language (W3.org 2015) that is used to create html elements, most commonly tags enclosed in angle brackets that, in a most simplified way, describe how a certain element appears on a screen. This element can be for example text and html tags are used to divide the text to a header, the lead, the body text and so forth. CSS, Cascading Style Sheets is another language that can be read by web browsers. It is highly recommended, and essential to responsiveness of the website to use CSS to control the style and layout of different pages on a website.

The importance of CSS comes through more clearly from this introduction from The World Wide Web Consortium (W3C), that is the main international standards organisation for the World Wide Web: “One of the most important features of style sheets is that they specify how a document is to be presented on different media: on the screen, on paper, with a speech synthesizer, with a braille device, etc.” This means that Style Sheets dictate how the layout on any webpage looks. Later W3C went on to create media queries as a part of CSS specification that not only allows targeting specific screen sizes, such as iPhone 4, but activates the style sheet whenever a website is viewed with any device with almost similar resolution, changing the typographic properties as well as image scaling and layout of the page automatically. (W3Schools, w3.org, Wikipedia)

For example, it can be defined, that a certain media query is incorporated in a style sheet’s media attributes, meaning that it inspects if the device that the website is viewed is equal or less than 480 pixels. If the device is a small screen device such as a smart phone, the device will load a CSS file that is designed for small displays. If the device size is bigger, the query ignores this style sheet altogether. In a nutshell, every time a device goes through a media query, the relevant CSS is applied, no matter which the exact device in use is.

### 3.5 Re-organizing the layout

As the screen size get smaller, the elements on the screen need to be re-organized. Re-arranging the elements can be applied to the style sheets by using a grid system. In a

wide screen a multiple images and text boxes can appear side by side, but as a rule of thumb, no website should ever have a horizontal scroll bar just because the elements cannot fit in to the screen certain size. Creating a media block query to a style sheet calculates the width of the screen and the elements appearing side by side and reduces their amount as the size reduces. This code will start stacking the elements on top of each other so that the site can be viewed only using the vertical scroll. This query alone is not enough to make the layout work in smaller devices, because the elements need also to be scaled down. By using the fluid grid system, the media query can count a better grid optimal for certain screen size, and for example, replace a three-column layout with a two-column layout to achieve a smaller overall width of a website. (Krentz, Kurowska & Kurowski. 2014)



IMAGE 8. The Boston Globe website is a good example of a responsive web design for a site with a lot of content. As the screen width reduces, the layout scales from a 3-column layout to two columns in tablet resolution and one column in smart phone screen. (Screenshots: bostonglobe.com).

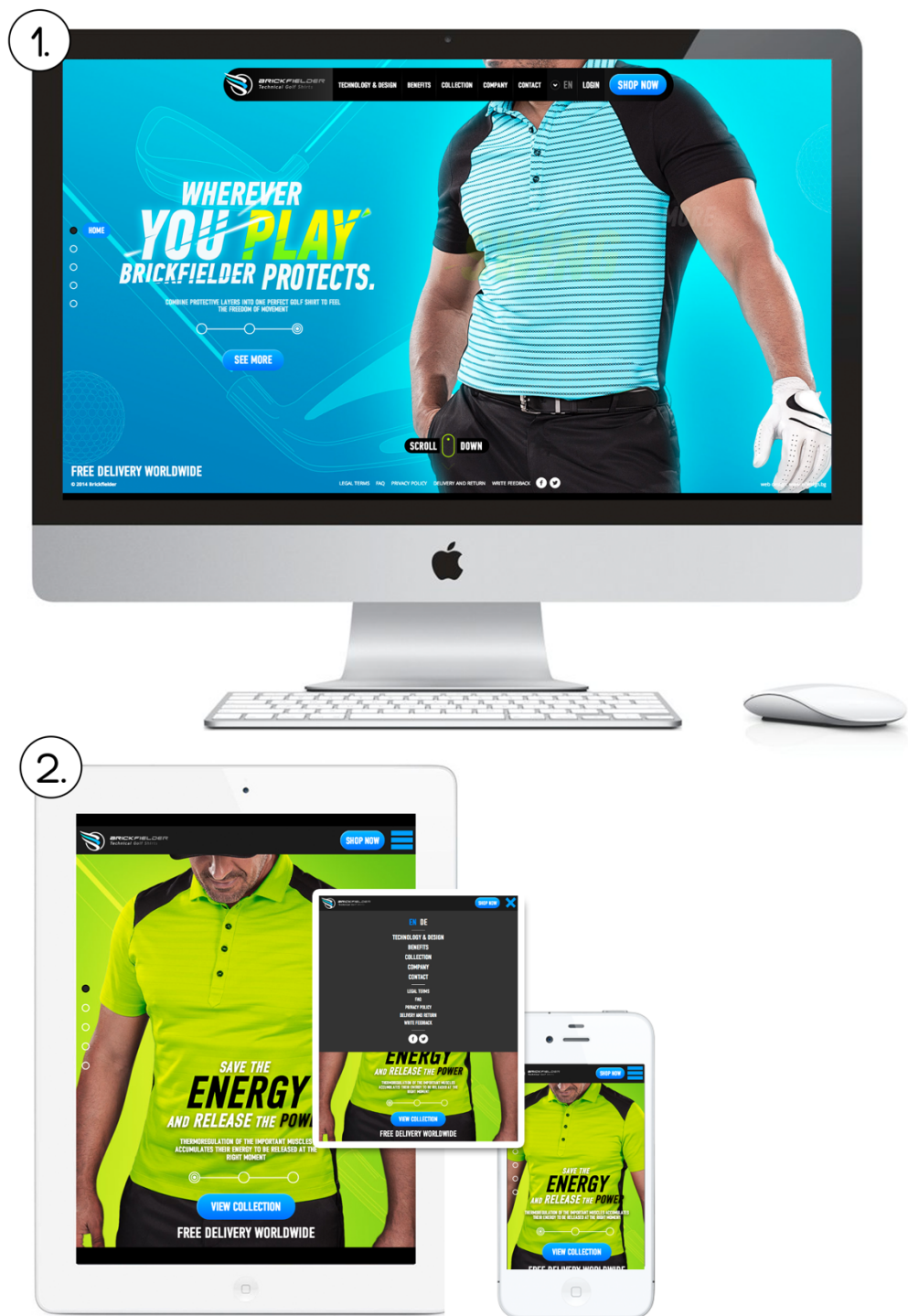


IMAGE 9. Example on how the main page layout changes in a design that has a lot of graphic elements and animated effects. (Screenshot: brickfielder.co.uk).

In the picture 12, is an example of a responsive website that adjusts seamlessly to different screens. When the website is viewed from a large desktop computer, the visitor

will see a screen like in screen 1. The page consists of a background image displaying the products of a company. The image changes into a new one every couple of seconds with a smooth transition and the hero text on top of it is tastefully animated when a new picture appears, everything else on the screen remains static. The navigation and language options menu are placed on top of the page. It includes links to different sub pages from the detailed technical information about the products to the company's story and a direct link to the web store. The link to the store is highlighted and made to stand out to the potential customer by making it different colour as well as including bigger text and making it a clickable button. On the bottom of the page are the links that are not as important to the visitors, consisting from legal information, privacy policy and so forth and the "buttons" for the brand's social media sites.

In the picture 12 (Screen 2), the layout has changed to serve better the tablet users. The navigation is replaced with a simple symbol, casually called "the hamburger menu". This symbol is widely used on mobile sites to show where one can open the navigation menu that would be hard to display like in the desktop version due to a reduced width of the screen. When pressing the "hamburger icon", the navigation opens as a drop-down menu, with the links displayed in a vertical list (section 3.). The other noticeable visual change is, that the background image as well as the hero text is now completely static and all the animations and transition effects are removed. Due to an often smaller bandwidth, the mobile site needs to be a lot lighter than a desktop version, meaning that all the extra effects need to be removed. Also an important notice is that the mobile browsers usually do not support any kind of Flash files (Google Webmaster Central 2012). It is a smart choice to replace possible flash animations or elements with static images as the screen size reduces.

### **3.6 Interview: Stephen Fenech**

Stephen Fenech is one of the leading developers at Nosto, captaining the Machine Learning team to develop even more fine tuned and sophisticated solutions to enhance the ecommerce experience. Because of his busy schedule, the interview was conducted via email.

I was curious to know, if there are any noticeable trends in how the customers are behaving when visiting online stores with different devices. Fenech has seen, that the users are becoming more and more comfortable to browse the stores using mobile, and this has lead to an increasing conversion rate on phones as well. This can of course, reminds Fenech, be partly due the fact that the merchants have identified the importance of mobile and thus invested in the mobile user experience.

When asked about how the content on a mobile site might differ from the desktop version, Fenech mentions the importance of image sizes and the feel of the touch gestures. "The product view should not be cluttered but it should be possible to drill down into all the details", he continues. Using product recommendations makes it easier for the visitor to navigate in the store.

A good and prominent search is also essential, since navigating through large category menus with many nested subcategories can be simply tedious. Furthermore, having a simpler category structure will help. "For example, if you have 2 main categories, male and female, it might make sense that on the front page you will have a call to action for both categories as big buttons so that users can quickly go to the main subcategories" explains Fenech. The most used categories can be highlighted as large clickable buttons or images, that direct the visitor straight to the category page. As an example of good navigations, Fenech mentions Zalando, which shows the subset of the available categories in the menus, but then also allows the visitor to "show all", taking her to a different page specifically designed to go through the category menu.

For users, who like browse products on mobile, but don't feel comfortable making the purchase, Fenech suggest having a feature, that sends the cart via email, so the customer can then presume shopping on another device. "Of course the importance of this will diminish as buying from mobile is becoming more friendly", Fenech continues.

For the biggest challenges of mobile ecommerce, Fenech first mentions making it easy to find products that the visitor is interested in. For a solution, he mentions product recommendations. Another problem area is checkout. There is a lot of work to be done for improving payments, he ponders. For example a solution, whether mobile will actually work as a credit card, would make the shopping experience a lot more streamlined. Fe-

nech visions a single click to request to buy, followed by a confirmation from the mobile bank's app, without the need to enter credit cards or log in to online bank to authenticate the purchase.

Design-wise, Fenech thinks that mobile first approach is the way to go, meaning the philosophy, where the mobile view with all the essential parts is designed first, and an often more complicated desktop version built on top of that. He mentions one the shops he believes has been built using "mobile first", The Iconic (See image 10), using the approach with large images as buttons to help the visitor to get to the categories that interest them the most.

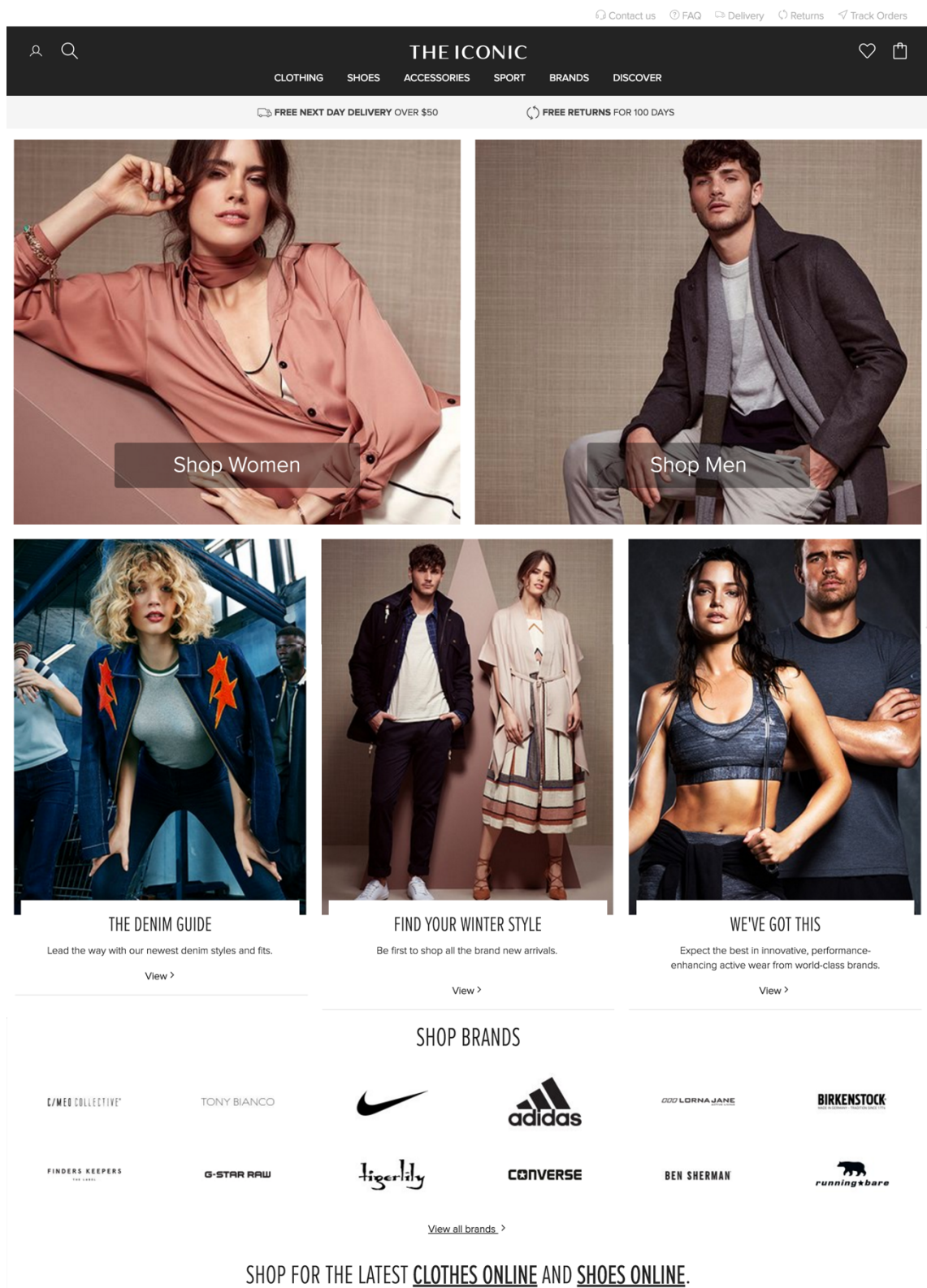


IMAGE 10. The Iconic website is a good example of "mobile first" –design. The large images guide the visitors to find the category they wish to shop in. (Screenshot: [www.theiconic.com.au](http://www.theiconic.com.au)).



## 4 CONTENT IS KING

For a long time, the marketers have been treating internet as merely another sales channel that, whilst enables them to access new markets and customers, bares no difference in the way the business in conducted. Recently many firms have finally begun to realize that virtual market places differ radically from the traditional channels and require a new way to cater the customers engaging content and interaction. (Zott & Donlevy 2000, 3.)

The importance of proper content for an online store to be profitable and attractive to the customers, is becoming a more and more talked about subject. There are a lot of examples on how to curate content to a web page. One option is to think about some common problems and issues that the customer segment of the e-store might be pondering with, relating to the clothing line that is being sold. Although, not all the content has to be directly related to the products of the shop but it can be interesting and relatable to the target audience in other ways too.

### 4.1 The art of storytelling

A Psychology Today article highlights the fact that when evaluating brands, they primarily use emotions instead of facts and the strongest meter whether an advert is going to be successful is its likability. The article goes as far as to argue that "A brand is nothing more than a mental representation of a product in the consumer's mind." Consumers are prone to find similar "personality traits" in brands as they experience while interacting with other people, "and just like with people, they are attracted more to some personality types than others". Another important factor for the consumer is the brand's narrative, as in how it communicates "who" it is and what it means to the consumer. (Murray 2013).

This observation combined with the fact that being told a story changes radically the way the human brain work and how they act in life, has made the marketers discover new and engaging ways to communicate with their target audience. New York Times article explains that recently the scientists have found out that in addition to the classical language regions of the brain, reading emotionally charged words activates other areas

of the brain as well. For example reading words such as ‘lavender’, ‘cinnamon’ or ‘soap’, activate the region connected with the areas in brain that is devoted for smell. The use of metaphors can also be tested for efficiency. While the sentence: ”The singer had a pleasing voice” did not activate any areas in brain in addition to the language processing cortex, altering the sentence to: ”The singer had a velvety voice” activated also the area connected to the sensory cortex of the brain. Similarly, the sentences involving words describing motion stimulate the motoric cortex of the brain. It seems like there is not much difference if a person is reading a story or experiencing it oneself. (Murphy Paul 2012) To the marketers the discoveries mentioned above mean that a deep understanding of the target group and its emotional drivers is an asset that can define, in the end, if a brand succeeds or not.

Brianne Rush (2013) modifies the information of these studies in to a to-do list for the marketers. First she suggests finding out through conversations what drives the experience of the buyers. In user experience terms, one might also talk about theme interviews with the target audience. These interviews evolve around the themes that the interviewer wants to explore but are not as strict as many other forms of interview as the connotations are basically drawn from the free conversation flow between the interviewer and the subject. Theme interviews are a good method to discover the hidden motivations between the consumer's. (Rush 2013)

## **4.2 Originating story**

Next Brianne Rush suggests to prioritize the authenticity as much as possible by highlighting the stories of the employees, customers and other industry professionals. There is no need to shy away from using the names, settings and positive outcomes as it makes the story more relatable for the reader. Many brands use their originating story as a differentiating factor to stand out from the competitors. Stories have heroes and marketers are able turn the brand, the employees, or the customers into heroes with positive effects on both internal and external brand perceptions (Liljander 2011).

One great example is Crew Clothing, a company that has been mentioned also in the section tackling the personalized notifications. Unlike many brands that still trust to the power of a short generic introduction, Crew Clothing engages the reader into a story of

the founder Alastair Parker-Swift. First off the story describes the humble beginnings of the brand as Alastair lives in a small UK coastal town and its windsurfing scene. Little by little, he starts to create his own brand with dedication and will-power:

”Nurtured in the back of a windsurfing shop in Salcomb, Alastair took his small but distinctive off-duty collection to the ultimate testing ground – Cowes Week – on the Isle of Wight. His stock sold out and his conviction was proven (crewclothing.co.uk).”

The story goes on to praise the brand's English heritage and quotes from the founder like the following:

”I set up a little stand in the gym in London, and in Walks Princess Diana... and she bought a navy and pink rugby shirt for Prince William. That was pretty cool (crewclothing.co.uk).”

This small passage places the brand right at the heart of British history and establishes its roots in an engaging way. The only thing that the company could have thought further, are the generic product photos accompanying the story. The page could have been displaying instead, are images of the founder during the years, or a visualized timeline showing how Crew Clothing became to be the brand it is now. The text accentuating the authenticity of the brand needs to be illustrated accordingly to create even more traction

A wonderful example of using images to enhance the story's impact can be found from the Lewis website. ”In 1873, workers needed pants that could work and endure, so Levi Strauss and Jacob Davis combined denim fabric and rivet reinforcements, creating the first part of Levi's: the 501 Original jean”, says the description that is accompanied by an image slider consisting of powerful imaginary throughout the history (see image 11).



IMAGE 11. Images can convey an emotional story. Lewis shows it has been a part of some of great moments in the history as well as a pretenseless part of a modern lifestyle. (Screenshot: levi.com)

### 4.3 Optimised content for every media

To assure, that the target group is offered with the most interesting content, one must have studied the target group closely, to reveal their interests and passions. At the process of content creation, is time to take the information collected and break it down to single ideas and questions that can be used as topics for the written content.

Depending on the clothing sold, the questions could be for example: "What fabrics are best for cold weather?", "What materials to use while working out?", "What is the trendiest colour palette for the autumn?". After discovering the area of interest of the target group, the e-store could provide insightful blog articles concentrating on these topics. Because of the current selection of social media platforms, it is not necessary to limit the content to one channel, but the message could also be refined to multiple media. Keeping in mind that different ways in communicating work in different media. No one wants to see the same generic message pushing through from all the channels.

### 4.3.1 Blogs

Blogs have become a popular medium for native web users. It enables almost anyone with an internet connection to become a provider of content to the ever growing maze of the web. It has been a stepping stone to many amateurs to become well known influencers as well as highly popular marketing assets to corporations that hope to reach their target audience through them. For a fashion e-store, a blog is a splendid addition to the website. To put it simply, blog is a place to tell stories. Include stunning visuals and even videos.

As I have mentioned earlier, a good ranking on Google is a necessity to any online business. Blogging is a handy way to drive customers to the store as well as improving the SEO, search engine optimisation. Google improves the website's ranking based on the amount of external links that will lead to a certain website. A blog that consists of interesting and enlightening articles encourages people to re-blog and link it on social media. A regularly updated blog also signals Google that the site is being updated and this leads to a higher ranking on the search engine as well. (Wang 2014.)

It has to be emphasized, that the blog can not only be a sales channel that only concentrates in promoting the products on the website but it should offer external value to anybody visiting the site. "This is a blog, not an in-site advertising platform", as the e-commerce guide of Nosto puts it (Coltman 2015).

When planning content for the blog, one must yet again think about the target audience and what kind of articles would be beneficial for them, and also, what kind of problems they face in their everyday that the blog could help them solve. Let's think about the user profile (Picture 2) created earlier of Susanna Lehtonen, a 33-years old mother of two who liked shopping children's clothing online. What kind of articles would she like to read? She wants to make ethical and ecological choices, so perhaps she would find useful a blog explaining the company's values; as well as an article about how the clothing is made and from what kind of materials. The blog can also contain fun fashion shots that serve as an inspiration for Susanna how to clothe her kids on different seasons and enlightening information on how to get rid of the stains in the clothes, something

that is an unavoidable part of almost any parent's life. When one starts to delve deeper in to Susanna's world, more and more interesting questions come to mind.

In addition to the example above, on Shopify blog, Dan Wang (2014) has featured a comprehensive list of topics that could be refined in to blog posts:

1. Tutorials for how to use the products
2. Announcement for a sale
3. Events the retailer is running or participating in
4. Advice on products, not just the retailer's own
5. Company updates
6. Developments in the industry
7. Something fun found from the web that could, but necessarily does not have to, relate to the retailer's products

Each of the subjects above, formed into an enlightening blog post, is a good example on how to stay topical and nourish already existing customer relations as well as gaining a larger audience and clientele.

#### **4.3.2 Examples of interesting blogs**

I have gathered some examples where e-retailers have integrated a blog into the equation and succeeded in creating extra value to the website by doing so.

Helm Boots' blog is all about shoes (See image 14). They have a series of interviews on the subject's favourite pair of shoes and the story behind that. Also, the blog follows the company's tours around the US continent, accompanied with beautiful images, both about the product and graceful snaps of the surroundings. The blog also uses video embedded on the site to advertise the new collection. All in all, the posts paint a picture of a company that is really dedicated to their craft and want to share the love with their followers, possibly gaining a bunch of customers on the side.



FAVORITE SHOES SERIES

## Favorite Shoes Series: Taylor Welden

by HELMLIFE · SEPTEMBER 24, 2015



FAVORITE SHOES SERIES

## Favorite Shoes Series: Timothy Morales

by HELMLIFE · SEPTEMBER 24, 2015

IMAGE 12. Helm Boots' blog is all about shoes. (Screenshot: [helmboots.com/blogs/blog](http://helmboots.com/blogs/blog))

Mr Porter, an upmarket men's clothing shop publishes a weekly Journal that integrates blogging to more traditional printed media by publishing a set of lengthy articles accompanied by to the point, fresh photography. Every weeks issue has its own theme. For example, one issue is called "The Self-Improvement Issue". It offers articles on how to decide which haircut suits you, a column on the hottest fashion trends for 2016 and advice on how to "Reinvent Your Style". It also includes the first edition of a new video series "focusing on different fitness regimes" titled: "Why You Should Try.. Boxing". All in all, I think Mr Porter is an outstanding example on how to create content that is high-quality and highly optimised for the target group.



IMAGE 13. Mr Porter's weekly journal brings blogging closer to more traditional editorial magazines. (Screenshot: [www.mrporter.com/journal](http://www.mrporter.com/journal).)

Self-proclaimed “Lifestyle Destination for Conscious Consumers”, Zady (see image 14), also hosts an appraised blog. It reflects the company's ideology that is, manufacturing clothes that are ethical, caring about the work standards as well as the ecological aspects of the process. Their “Chronicle”, as the blog is called, is not trying to sell the readers anything, but instead spreading the word on many of the aspects the company is ideologically engaged with. The Chronicle caters the readers with articles about the worker's conditions in the clothing industry, insight on the materials used to make fabrics, such as cotton and a causerie on the side effects of dry cleaning.



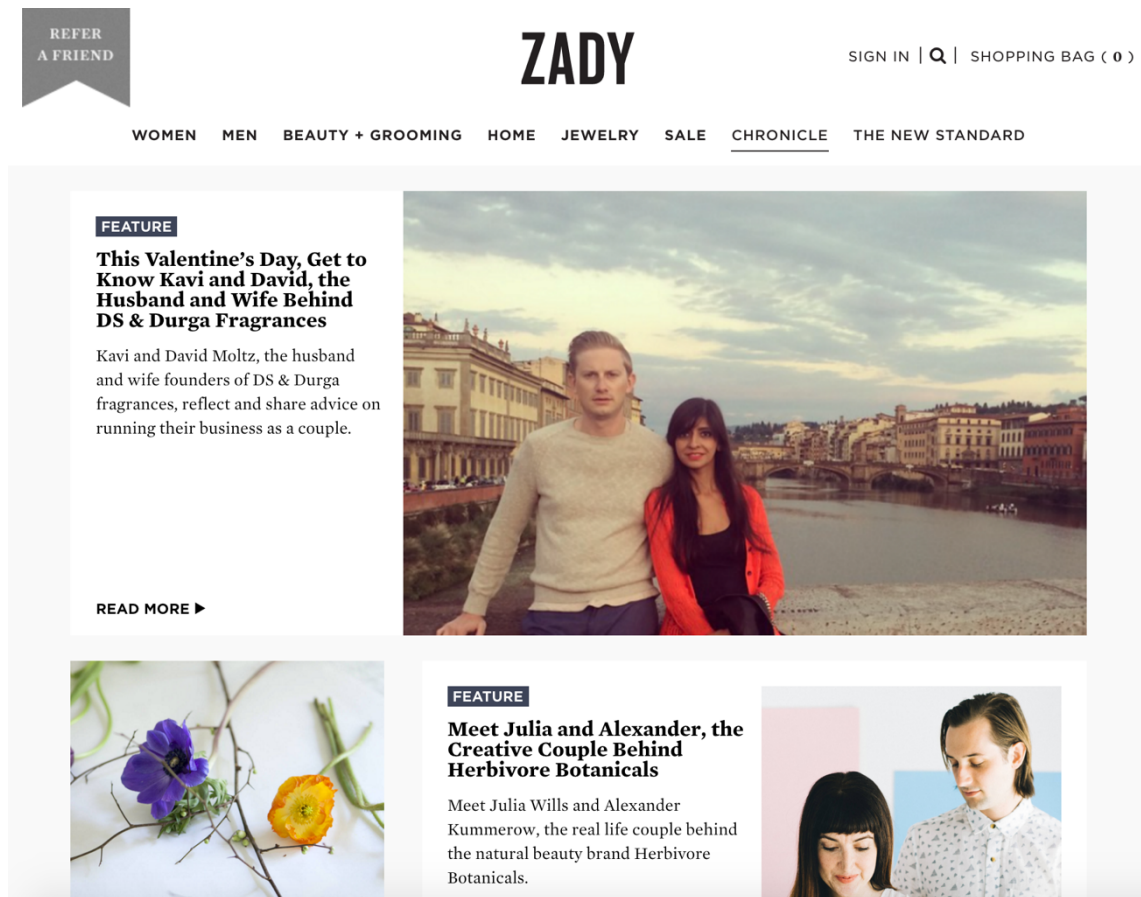


IMAGE 14. Sustainability is the key word on Zady's blog. (Screenshot: zady.com/features)

#### 4.4 Home page - a call to action

The home page of the shop can be seen as a display window of the store, the one that attracts the interest of the visitor and presents her an overall view of the stock. Often-times, the home page is constructed from a big, stylistic header image that also includes a call to action. Call to action (CTA) is a term that is highly topical in the world of advertising and marketing. "A call to action is the section of a marketing or sales message which tries to convince a person to perform a desired action immediately", explains About Money and also alleges, that if CTA is missing from the marketing communication, it usually leaves the audience unclear on the next step that they are supposed to take.

CTA can consist of action phrases, such as: "Sign up", "Register", "Buy" or "Subscribe", or urgency phrases highlighting for example, that the offer is only valid for a

certain amount of time or that one must take action before the supplies run out. It must clearly explain how the customer should response to the offer, what one is going to receive and what the major benefit of the offer is. Also, when the urgency is emphasised, the CTA must explain why there is a good reason for the customer to act before the deadline. (About Money.)

The sports clothing retailer Volcom's home page displays a stylistic hero image representing the youthful and sporty lifestyle that is the heart of the clothing brand (See image 17). It is not a detailed product shot those will come later on the same page, but something more conceptual dictating the mood of the website. The CTA is one of the most traditional ones, encouraging the visitor to shop for the items that are now on sale. It also reminds that the sale has been going on for a while and that it is now the second markdown, something that usually implies, that the deadline for the sales is approaching. For a visitor who has been on the site earlier, the call to action is that now there are even more products on sale than before.

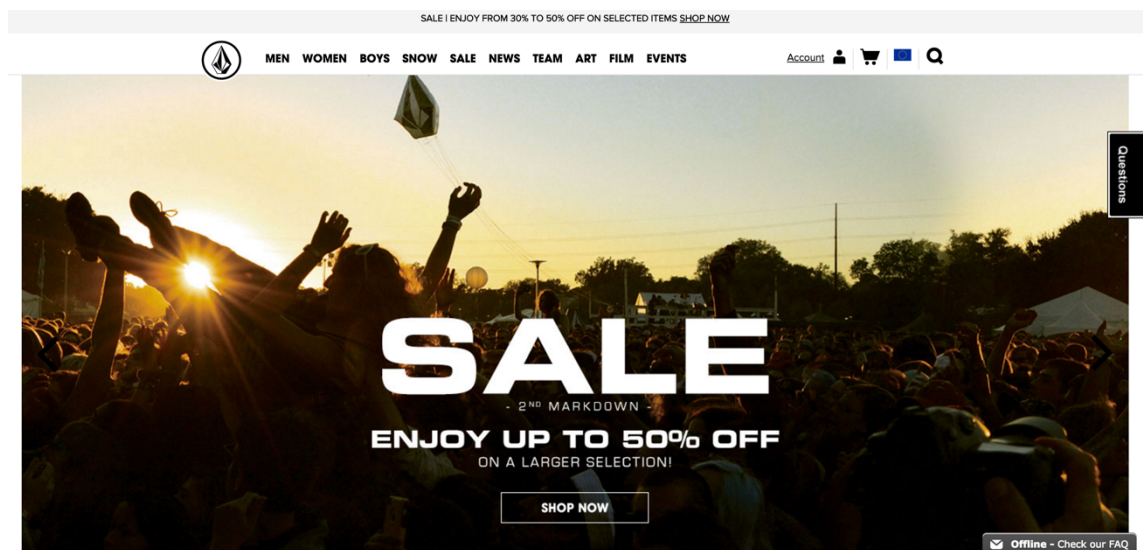


IMAGE 15. Volcom's main CTA is related to a sale the website's hosting. (Screenshot: volcom.com)

Like in the Volcom website, many online stores are displaying multiple changing hero images in a rotating banner. In addition to the Sales CTA, there was also a banner, each for women's and men's swimwear and a new line of jeans. Rotating offer banners seem to be highly popular amongst e-merchants and the reasons behind the hubris are easy to figure out. Displaying varying offers makes the header more relevant to a larger group

of people. In opposition to this trend, a question whether a bunch of rotating offers actually dilutes the call to action has risen to the surface. For example, Wider Funnel has examined that there are various problems with the rotating banners. First of all, it is something that the visitor that comes to the site must get accustomed to and observe for a while to possibly see the offer that is relevant to this particular person. Once the visitor finally sees the offer that attracts her attention, depending on the amount of information and the looping of the rotation, there might not be enough time to read it through and skimming back and forth the rotating header carousel is not something many visitors are motivated to do. (Wider Funnel 2011.) This is partly the reason why another design trend has surfaced just recently, reducing the irrelevant or secondary information from the page and accentuating the CTA by having only one clear message on the page.

#### **4.4.1 Introducing the stock**

Alongside with the appealing CTA, the homepage must introduce a good overall view of the store's selection of products. This can be done for example by dividing the supply into simple categories that are represented in banners that spread out in a grid-like system under the hero image as well as varying lists of recommended products. There are multiple options for home page product recommendations but a good idea is showing the best-seller items, items that are on sale, and personalised recommendations that can be based on the visitor's browsing history. There are also fun examples of personalising based on the visitor's location, a subject that was tackled in the first of the three parts of this thesis.

Using, again, Volcom as an example (See image 18), though similar structure can be found from a wide array of web stores. Under the hero image and main CTA, Volcom directs the visitors to view four different categories. In addition to these shortcuts, the website offers the visitor even more options to choose from by displaying product recommendations in two different categories; "Featured items" and "Best sellers". This gives the visitor even better knowledge on what the store offers and what other people have bought recently.

Zalando is a great example of personalization of the landing page (See image 19). When first logging in to Zalando home page, the site is displaying three simple category op-

tions, men, women and children and under these is the best-selling products list accompanied by the most popular brands. This gives a first time visitor a good overall view on what products and brands to look for in a store that sells thousands of pieces of clothing from hundreds of brands. When the visitor has logged in repeatedly, the site offers a much more sophisticated, curated list of items especially recommended for the individual user. These lists are based on the individual preferences browsing history, purchase history and demographic profile.

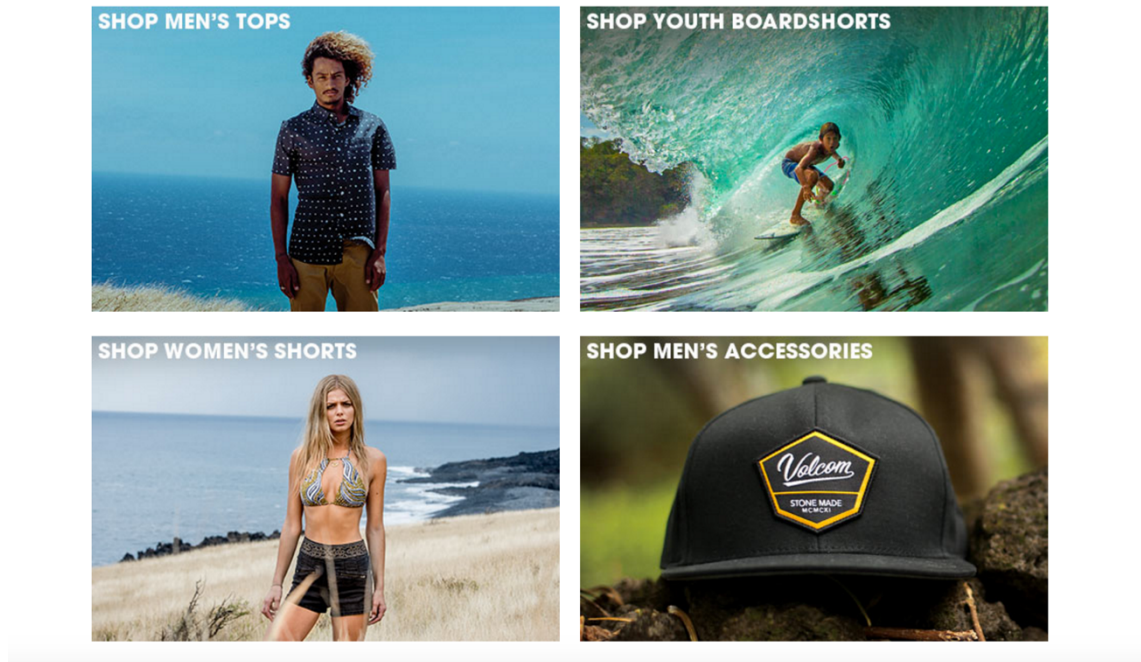


IMAGE 16. Volcom introduces some of its most popular categories on the landing page. (Screenshot: volcom.com)



IMAGE 17. Net-a-porter home page features a real-time list of what other visitors are currently adding to their baskets. (Screenshot: net-a-porter.com).

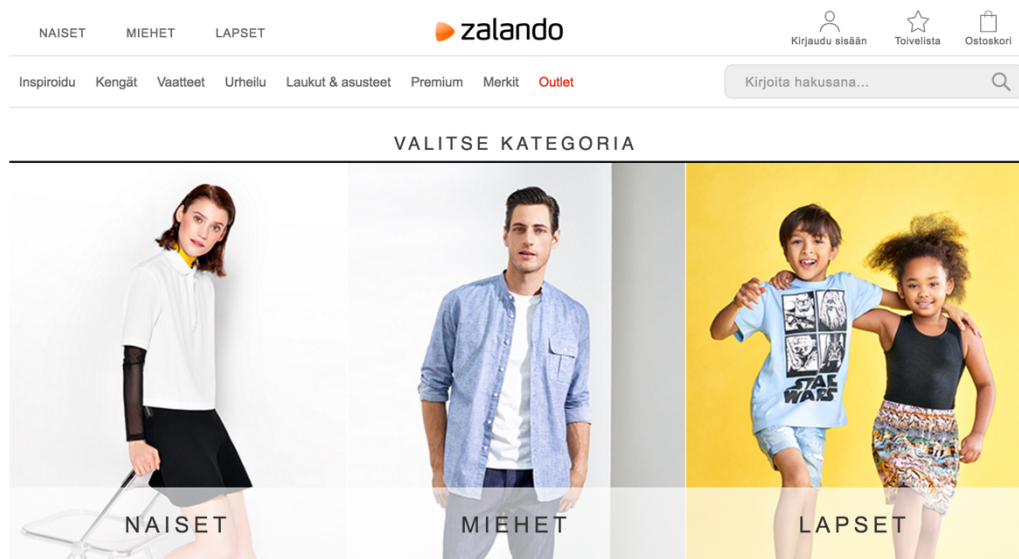


IMAGE 18. View when landing to the Zalando website for the first time. (Screenshot: zalando.fi.)

## 4.5 Product photography

When you step into a brick-and-mortar store and explore the selection of products at hand, it is only natural to want to use all of your senses to study them. First, you select

the product you are interested in according to visual cues. Then you might pick it up- examining its weight, the material and the overall feel of it. You might even smell it. And then, and only then, is a purchase decision made.

In the virtual world of ecommerce however, browsing items is an entirely different game. The client's ability to touch, hold or smell the product is stripped away- all one can do is rely on the visual cues that a website offers. Product photography then becomes one of the most important ways through which to sell to the visitors of the website. It can be a tough art to master but, when done right, it is also something that can have a significant effect on conversion, for example a survey done by IRCE (Demery 2012) states that a whopping 75 percent of the consumers are making the purchasing decision based on the quality of the images. The following features were almost as important: Ability to see selected product colour of choice (68%), alternative views of selected item (66%) and zoom (61%).

Especially in the fashion industry, the size and fit of a product is the most important attribute and that is why misleading or poor quality photographs can be a massive driver of returns. The site must display all the important sides of the product, including both detailed close-ups so that the customer can see all the small details, from the quality of the fabric, the finishing of the seams to the detailed shot of the material used in the lining. A possibility to zoom in to the product photo is also important. The other option is to include several already zoomed in photos displaying the key details of the product.





IMAGE 19. Product must also be shown from multiple angles. This helps the customer to better understand the size of the item and allows a better visualization of the product details. For even more refined version, it is also possible to utilize 360 photography that allows the customers to truly see the product from all angels and even rotate it just like one would in a brick-and-mortar store. (Screenshot: pixelz.com)

Many businesses have also started to use video as an addition to still product photos. According to Digital Marketing Blog shoppers who view video are 1.81 times more likely to purchase than the ones that did not see the video. The article also states that 51.9 percent of marketing professionals worldwide name video as the type of content with the best return of investment. These statistics can be explained by the consumer's desire for education before making the purchase and a video provides an easy way to consume more information about the product. (Lloyd 2015.)

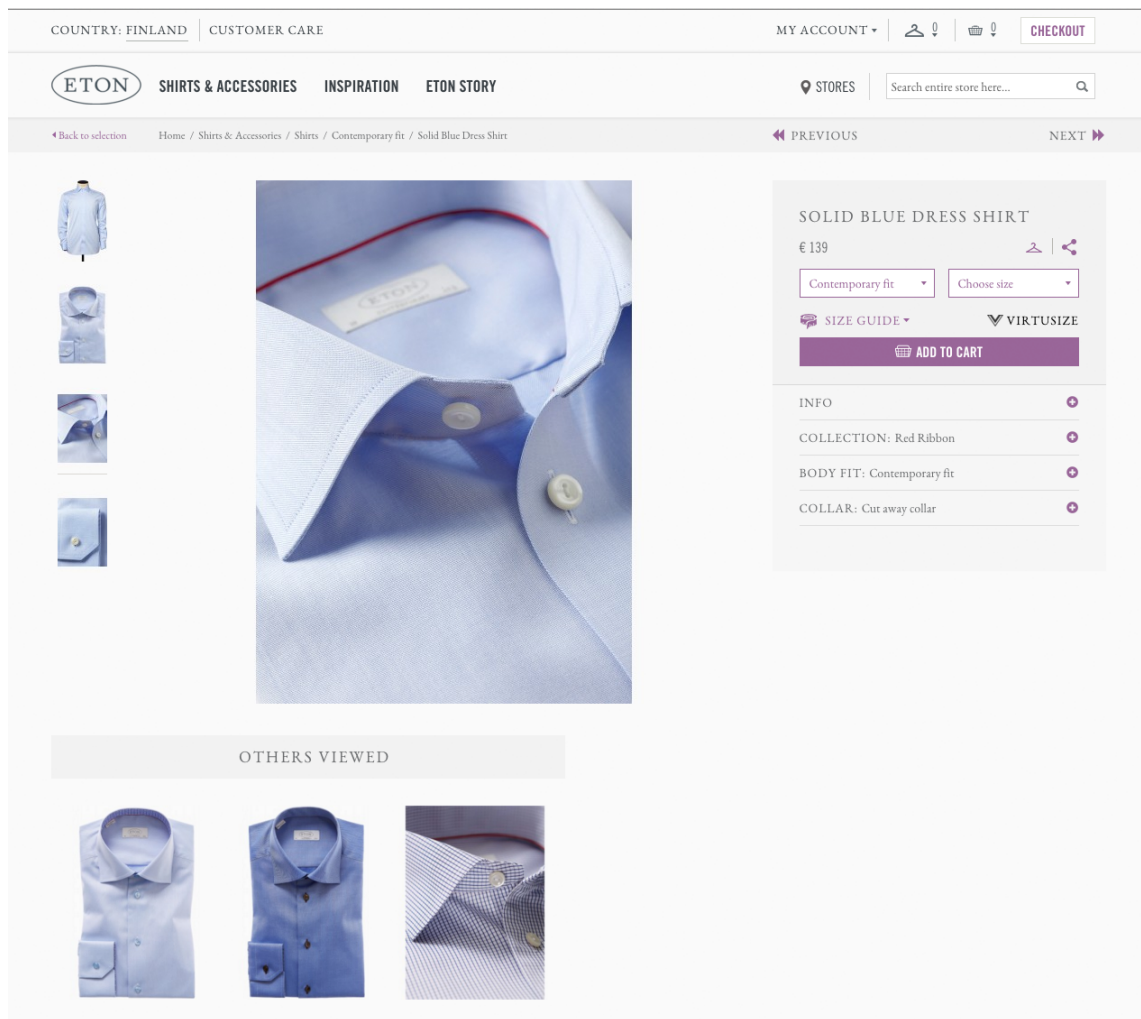


IMAGE 20. A Swedish company manufacturing quality menswear, Eton, use clean, sharp and beautifully lit images in their product page. They offer several photos from different angles and all the images can be zoomed in to view them even more into detail. (Screenshot: etonshirts.com).



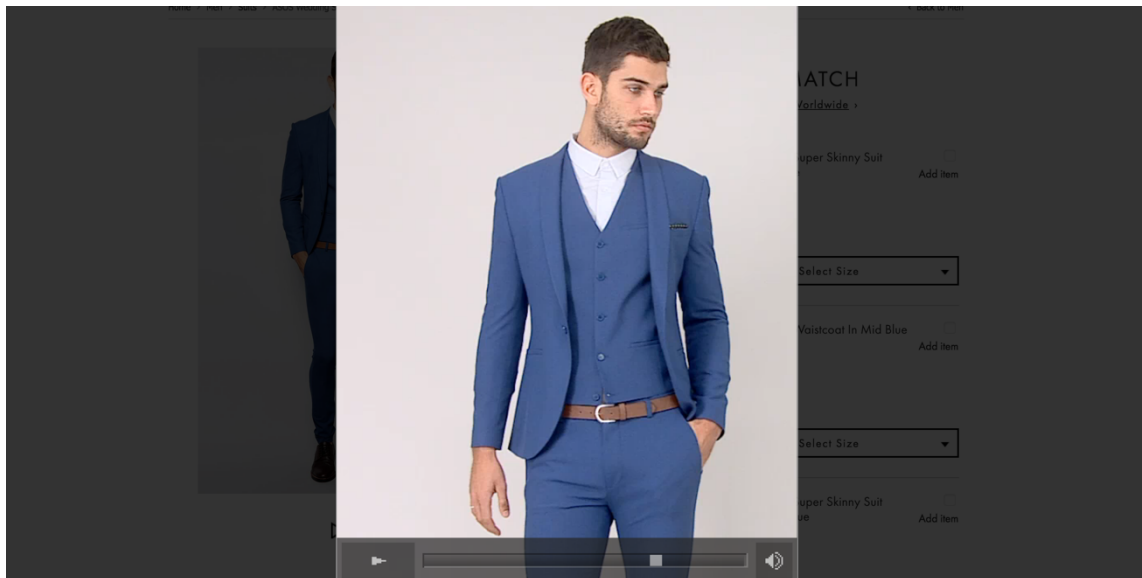


IMAGE 21. On top of the high quality product photos, Asos also offers the customer a possibility to view a short video of a model wearing the product while moving around in the studio setting. (Screenshot: Asos.com)

#### 4.6 User-generated content

User generated content (UGC) has risen into the mainstream through the social media that allows the public to become contributors in the media landscape like never before. UGC can be anything from tweets and Instagram photos to blog posts and videos, published either on the merchant's site or sourced from various web platforms and apps. Companies use UGC both in special campaigns designed to gain traction at the moment, or as a permanent part of their website that adds a dynamicity and contemporary feel in contrast to the more curated content.

One of the most common form of UGC used on ecommerce are customer reviews. According to a survey done by Moz.com, 67.7% of the respondents admitted that online reviews impact their purchasing decisions. They are also willing to look at the first and second page of Google search results when researching a certain product or company. The reviews are naturally a double bladed sword for the e-merchants. According to the same survey, the worst thing for the merchant is, if negative reviews emerge early in the search results. If there are three or more negative reviews, almost 60% of the potential customers will walk away. (Hinckley 2015.)

Aside from the Google search results, many e-stores have enabled a review function on their website, especially on the product pages. This way a potential customer can get immediate feedback from others who have already bought the item in question. Sometimes there is also a possibility to give the product a rating, usually from 1 to 5 and display the overall score above the additional commentary. To make the reviews even more convincing, to be able to post a comment, one must first log in using their social media profile. This way it is easier for others to believe that the posts are really written by actual customers instead of being a creation of the stores marketing apartment.

Some companies have found innovative ways to repurpose the content published by the customers on social media channels. For example, many fashion retailers have chosen to embed an Instagram feed on the website that shows real people using the clothing. The photos can be chosen manually or automatically selected using a particular hashtag anchor. The anchor might be simply the stores or certain brand's name or a special hashtag launched during a campaign. (Sexton 2015.) Although these images might break every rule for a proper product photo set above, they provide valuable social proof that other people have vouched for the brand and the product. (Millwood 2015.)

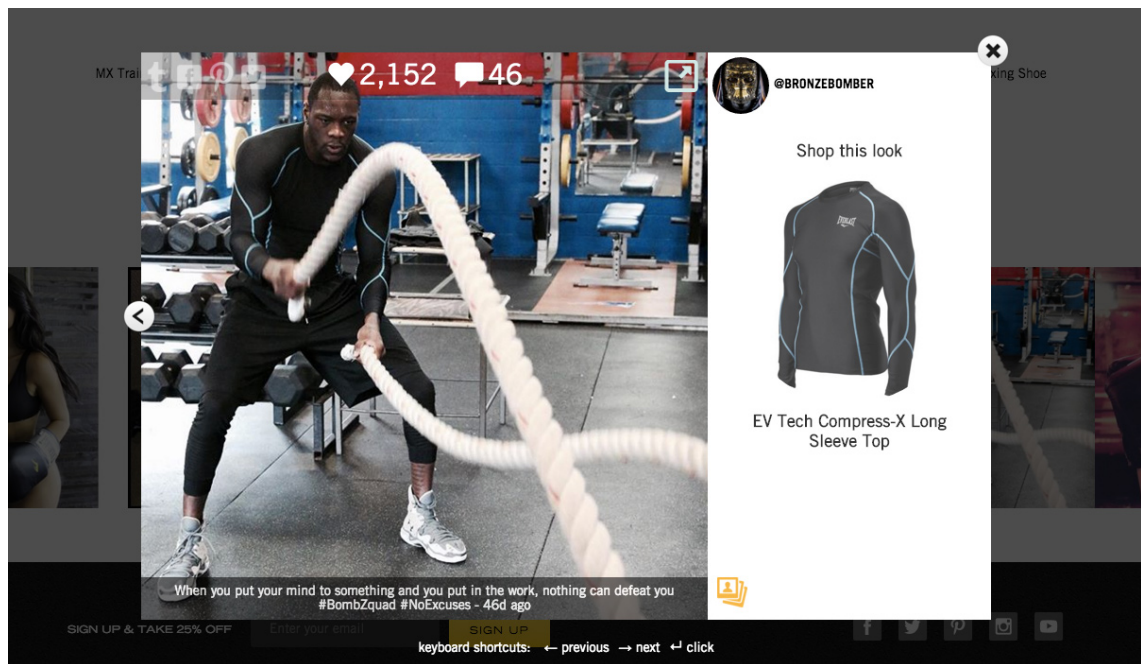


IMAGE 22. A sports clothing and accessory brand Everlast has embedded an Instagram feed “Everest Everyday” on their main home page. Their innovation has been to add a “shop the look” recommendation beside the picture. (Screenshot: everlast.com)

#### 4.6.1 UGC and copyrights

As one might assume, there are also some risks to take into account if the company decides to utilize UGC. It might be difficult to navigate in the copyright jungle and easy to ignore it once and for all when it comes to content published on, for example social media or e-stores comment section. College of Journalism, a blog hosted by BBC, has a comprehensive series of posts around the issue and a good read for anyone, whether a journalist, advertiser or a retailer.

First of all, the series tackles the issue of the reader’s (or customer’s) messages on the website’s comment section. The site is not liable for any commentary that the visitors have published unless they have been pre-moderated prior to the publication. (Radcliffe 2014). In my opinion, the e-store has every right to moderate the customer’s commentary, it is essential to remember that altering the conversation for a better result is definitely something that will cause distrust in the customers. Rather than deleting the negative comments, the retailer should make everything to correct the situation from the company’s end.

The other issue, that the blog series tackles, is plagiarism, or, content that is copied word for word from other sites. The author of the UGC article, Damian Radcliffe, is surprised how low the overall amount of high-profile copyright violations is in the media, “given the rise and relative ease of scraping.” He reasons, that perhaps it is just the complexity of the law and the volume of the content that makes this area difficult to supervise. However, there are an increasing number of online tools for detecting as well as reporting plagiarism and there are examples of the hefty fines that several publishers have had to pay for the original content after infringing the copyright. (Radcliffe 2014). It is always better to practise extra caution with UGC and to ask for further counselling if not sure of something since there are probably only a few things that can cause a worse backlash in public relations than using someone’s content without a permission, especially if the main motivation is to get financial profit out of it.

All in all, User generated content is an arising trend that offers many great, innovative ways for the e-retailers to connect with the target audience and participate in the social media conversation in a way that satisfies both parties. One just has to be clear on the terms and conditions and the dialog has to be transparent between the creator of the content and the ones hoping to utilize it in some form or way.

#### **4.7 Interview: Lottie Coltman**

For this part, I interviewed Lottie Coltman, who is the Content Marketing Manager of Nosto, She has written several e-books, about personalization, manages the Nosto blog as well as other marketing content for Nosto. On top of that, she has a wide background as a copywriter and marketing. As she does not live in the same country as me, the interview was conducted via Google docs and an an internal workplace chat.

She confirms that part the reason why there is a strong trend towards more curated content creation is, that brands have finally realized that ‘content is king’ and at the same time, the consumer is more time poor than ever. ” People simply do not have time to consume everything that is being produced - and they most definitely don’t want to waste their time on content that isn’t up to scratch”, she contemplates. Content creation has become a service, and a desirable one at that.

How to ensure that the target group is catered with the best possible content? According to Coltman, good content appeals to the likes, dislikes, hopes, dreams, problems and, ultimately the solutions, of your customers. It's about finding the crossover between what you want to say and what they are interested in. "And guess what? You can't do any of that without knowing who you are speaking to", she continues. The marketers must not only know what the target audience wants to hear, but also how they want to hear or see it. "It can feel like a huge task but I promise you that finding out who your target market truly are isn't a step you can skip", ensures Coltman, "in fact, it is the foundation of everything you do".

To research the target group and its desires, Coltman has three important remarks. First of all, she encourages to tap into the existing expertise within your company: "It is likely that you are already sitting on some of the information you so desperately need- tied up in your greatest assets; your people." They should be the first step in forming some hypothesis.

Then you should test this hypothesis "by going straight to the horse's mouth". This means seeking out your target audience and asking them as many questions as possible. This can be done with surveys, focus groups and one-to-one interviews. If you can not find the target audience, Coltman suggest taking a step back and doing some social listening. This can be done by finding out the relevant forums, using hashtags to scour social media or using tools like BuzzSumo, "which will help you identify the areas of the internet your customers call home." Colman also urges to go out into the real world: "conferences, trade fairs, events, on the street if you have to."

"There is no hard and fast rule as to how much you are able to sell before your content comes across as advertising", says Coltman and explains, that it depends on such attributes, as your product, brand, audience and where they are in the marketing funnel, and some people are just more willing to be sold than others. Coltman's recommendation is to go back to your target market and set content aims that are aligned with the target group's needs. Then Coltman suggests forming your content strategy to this end. "Then, and only then, should you begin to sell – and only when it feels natural", tells Coltman.

I was interested to hear, in Coltman's opinion, should an ecommerce company have a distinguished content strategy for different social media channels and how far ahead can the content be planned in advance. "Different social media platforms have different audiences, have different tones and uses and, as a results, lend themselves to different types of content", Coltman admits. She suggests to take all of this into account and have strategies specifically tailored to each one. This of course does not mean that there should not be areas of overlap and it is recommended to repurpose content to fit the different channels to save some time and effort.

In Coltman's opinion, content should be planned in advance as far as possible: "This will make your life easier and give you time to create content of quality", she explains. However, business, like life, is unpredictable and you sometimes have to allow aims and priorities to change. Having a content calendar that you can constantly re-address to make sure that it is achieving what it needs to be, is a great tool for a content creator. You also should not be afraid to rip something planned out if it no longer does the job.

This does not mean, that one should not also be spontaneous every once in a while. "Being spontaneous allows you to be topical, relevant and cutting edge of what is happening in your audience's world", Coltman recounts. That is an opportunity that any company cannot neglect.

When asked how the messaging should differ in various social media channels, Coltman again reminds, that is totally dependent on what the company does and how it communicates, but from a general perspective, there are a couple of general rules that can be followed:

Blog, is the space in the internet that you dedicate to own your subject, says Coltman. You should not be afraid of different post types, as long as each goes into depth to achieve its aims earning its space on the page.

About Facebook, Coltman says: " Although Facebook is a social media site, awash with cat videos and memes, it's not possible to say "Don't be serious on Facebook". This again is a matter what kind of company one has. Not every company has room for humour. If the company has a possibility to join the more light-hearted side of the site, then great, but Coltman suggest to "fit in ", think more about the content type. For

example video and live streaming are currently trending on Facebook. Do not change the messaging, but more how the message is delivered.

Twitter, even more than Facebook, is topical. This means, that whatever one is saying, it needs to be part of wider conversation. "In terms of messaging, succinct is your only option - you have 140 characters to work with use them wisely", reminds Coltman and also encourages to use images, as they encourage a much higher level of engagement.

When asked about examples of companies with exceptional blog or social media presence, Coltman mentions WholeFoods: "It lives and breathes their values, attends to the needs and interest of their customers and, when appropriate, gives insights into their company culture. It also promotes their products in a way that is interesting, informative and useful but doesn't feel like a sales pitch."

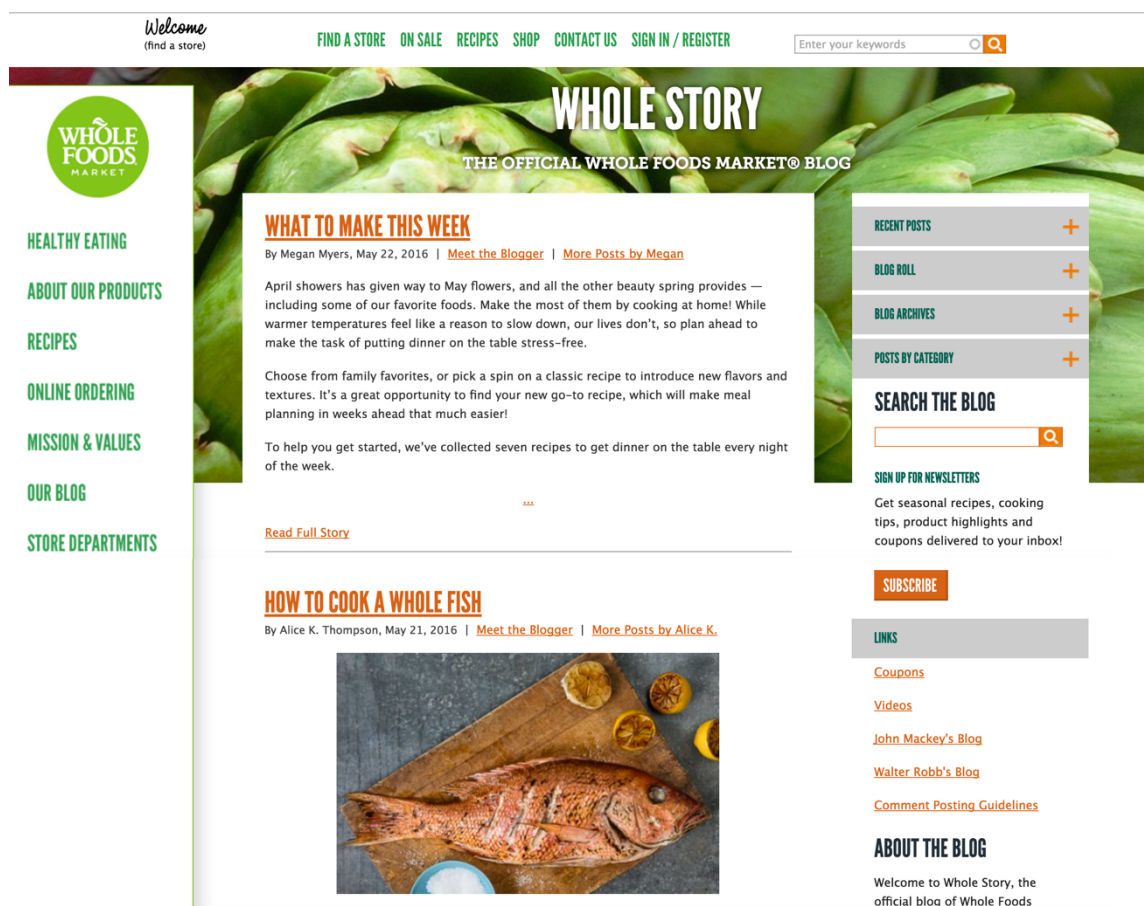


IMAGE 23. According to Coltman, the blog of WholeFoods is a great example of a effective company blog. (Screenshot: [www.wholefoodsmarket.com/blog/whole-story](http://www.wholefoodsmarket.com/blog/whole-story))

## 5 SUMMARY

After researching the subject of ecommerce extensively, and in the meantime even begun to work in the field, I am more convinced than ever, that online retailing will continue to shape the world of commerce by continually optimizing and personalizing the shopping experience both on- and offline. Customers, on average, are getting more and more comfortable with the technology and are willing to extent their shopping to the online environment. Instead of competing against each other, ecommerce and brick-and-mortar are coming closer together to ensure the best service to their customers.

In the heart of creating the best possible shopping experience is always the user. The merchants should know their target group inside out, to truly understand their needs and desires. The perfect combination of researching the target group is combining traditional user experience methods, such as focus groups, one-to-one interviews and customer personas and big data, that can be utilized in gaining a deep insight of the behavior of an individual customer while browsing the store. Customer segments are important especially when attracting new visitors to the store, but the technology has advanced to the point where it is possible to offer true one-to-one personalization to each individual customer in the form of product recommendations.

Even if the transaction happens online without a true face-to-face interaction, people's desire for quality customer service has not diminished at all. One must listen and react to their questions, concerns and compalints as soon as possible. This is especially important now that most of the conversation is automatically embedded to multiple social media channels and the backlash of poorly managed customer relations might result to customers completely abandoning the store.

A large part of a great shopper's experience is to create a great the user interface that embeds to all the devices. The fact that people will be browsing the site with anything from small mobile devices to large desktop screens, sets a lot of challenges to the designer, who needs to understand the possibilities and limitations of the responsive web design and plan the user interface accordingly.

Last but not least, one must understand, that content is still king. After researching the target group and building a solid responsive interface to support their online behavior,



the next big step is to plan quality content to the customers. Over the past couple of years, companies have started to understand how big a difference quality content makes. The content must always reflect the target group's mindset and be in line with the company's values and support its goals. One good way to do this is via company blog, that offers perhaps the best tool to for the company in getting its message across. Different social media channels, such as Facebook, Instagram, Pinterst and Twitter can not be ignored either as they are great channels for the company to gain more traction and establish a meaningful conversations with the customers. It's always best to plan the social media strategy beforehand as well as possible, but also leave room for spontaneous posts that reflect the most topical of the conversations. Last but not least, the every single piece of content should always exist only, if it fits the company's strategy and helps it to achieve its long term goals.

## **6 RESEARCH PROJECT – Designing Nosto marketing material to reflect the power of the solution**

Nosto is an ecommerce solution that helps online retailers to increase their overall sales and add value to their customer's online experience. Founded by Juha Valvanne, Antti Pöyhönen and Jani Luostarinen in Finland in 2011, Nosto has rapidly grown into a company employing around 100 people in five countries.

Nosto offers a way for retailers to get personal recommendations on their websites, as well as an option to embed them to emails and Facebook ads. Instead of requiring complicated integration processes, Nosto's recommendations are rather simple to install by just one snippet of code added to the existing platform. Nosto's pricing system is also unique, since there are no monthly costs and the retailers only pay Nosto for the sales that are generated through their recommendations.

### **6.1 Personalized recommendations**

Nosto offers multiple types of recommendations. On-site, there are multiple types of recommendations that are designed both to increase the conversion rates and make the customer's experience better. When first time landing to the page, the recommendations can show the most popular best sellers of the site to introduce the visitor the stock. Later, when the visitor has moved on to scroll through individual items, Nosto can show then the most relevant recommendation for the individual user. Once the user has placed something on their shopping cart, there is a possibility to cross-sell items that are related to the one already added to the cart. For example, if the item in the cart is a yoga mat, the recommendations might show products like yoga pants, training tops or water bottles. If the visitor searches for a certain product but it does not exist in the store, the recommendations show products that other people who have searched the same items have looked.

The merchant can also edit the recommendations themselves, for example determining the price range, category or brand of the recommended products.

Nosto also offers behavioral pop-ups that might convince more hesitant shoppers to keep on shopping on the site. A pop-up with a one-time offer code for a free shipping, 10% off the first order, or something similar, can be shown to the first-time visitors. The pop-ups can also be triggered by exit-intent, urging the visitor to keep shopping on the site, or, if the visitor already has items in cart, offering to send them to one's email address so that one can proceed with the order later. Via email, the merchants can also send same kind of personal recommendations based on the visitors behavior onsite. Email can also be used to remind a customer who has not visited the site for a while about the new products or products, that the visitor has viewed before, but not bought.

Facebook is another medium that Nosto has utilized so that the merchants may communicate with their clients as well as gaining new visitors by showing product ads on people's newsfeeds. Innovation is in the core of Nosto's philosophy, so they will be launching many new features even this year.

## **6.2 Moving up market**

I started as a marketing designer in Nosto in November 2015. My role is to create various marketing materials to the company's needs, whether it is an infographic for a company blog or an exhibition booth. One of my biggest projects this quarter has been to help repositioning the Nosto brand to be more in line with the bigger online retailers. Until now, the ease of the solution has been the core messaging, but as the company continues to grow, the messaging needs better display the true power and capabilities of the company's technology. At the same time, the product offering has continued to grow and adding new touch points has created a need to move away from talking about individual features to positioning the company as an all-in-one personalization solution.

My role in this project was to work with the content creators and data scientists and engineers to produce varying material to be used both internally and in marketing. My three core design tasks were: an online booklet explaining the personalization engine of Nosto, an infographic explaining the personalization features on different parts of the customer journey, from attracting to retaining, and multiple new designs to represent the company's new positioning at events.

### 6.3 How Nosto works?

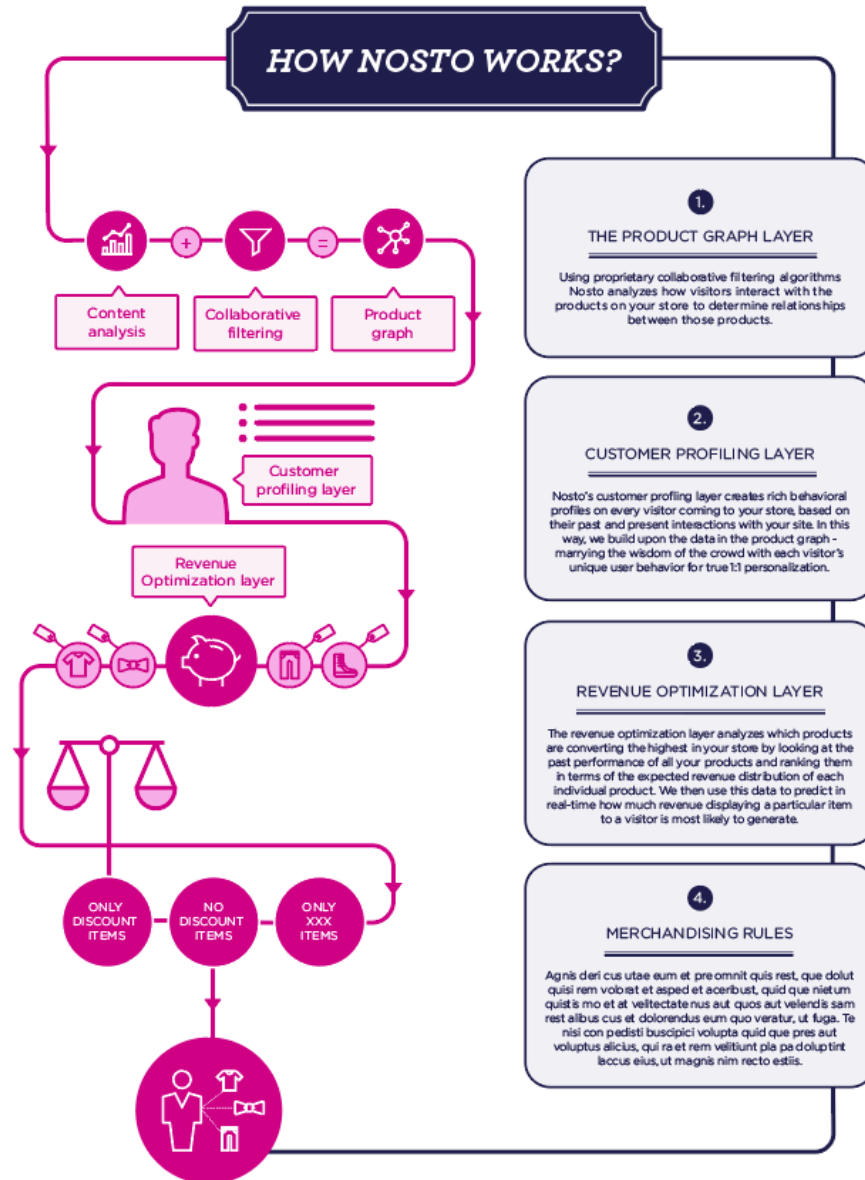
First I set out to visualize Nosto's Personalization Engine, where all the big data is gathered, analysed and made to produce actionable gains for the merchants. It consists of three core layers that together enable the use of personalized recommendations.

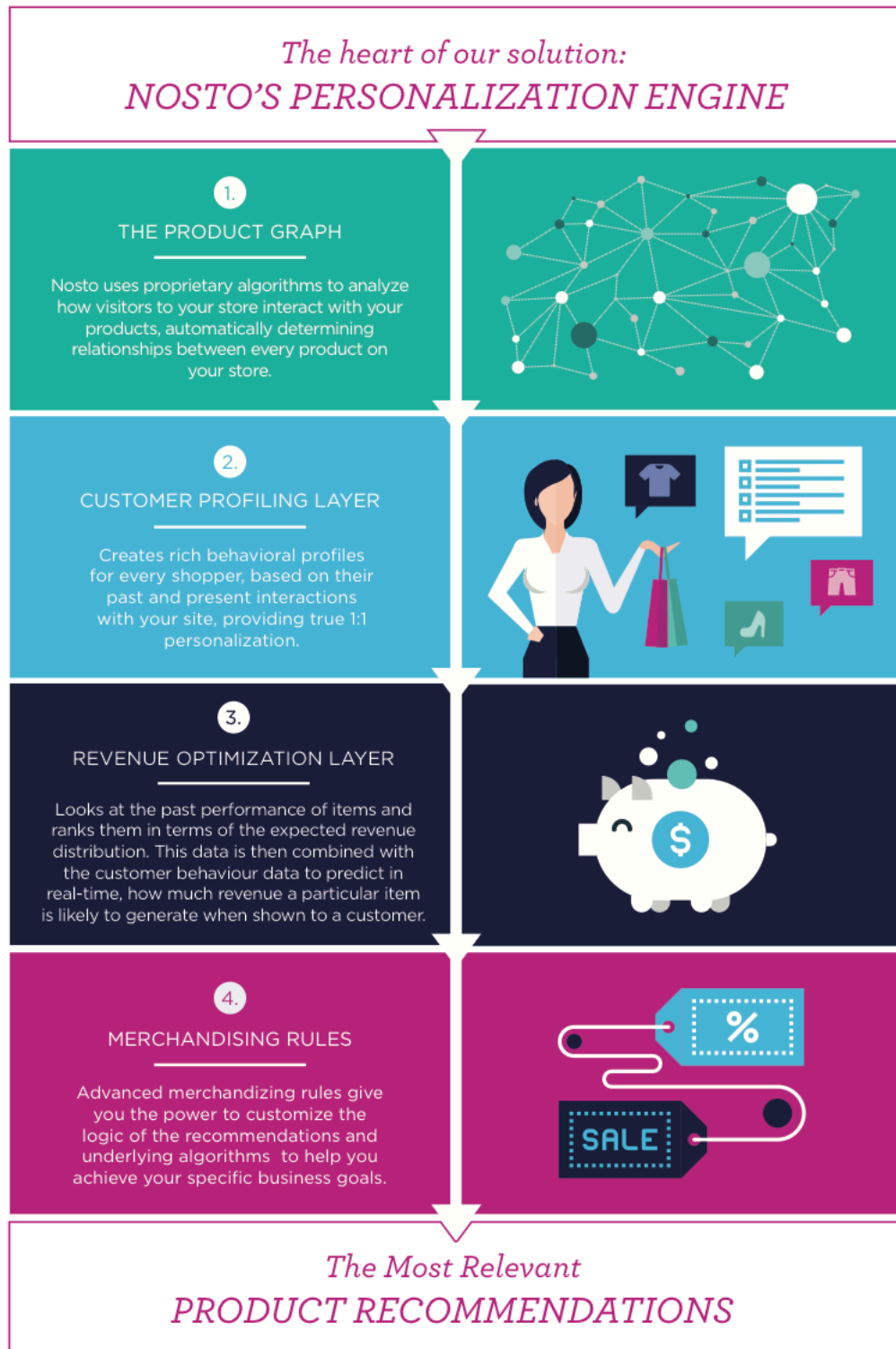
The product graph that is set to analyse how the customers interact with the products and then, determining the relationships between them. This means, for example, looking at products that are frequently viewed together, it is possible to generate product recommendations, such as: "Customers who viewed this product, also viewed these."

Next is the customer profiling layer, that creates behavioral profiles of each visitor coming to the store. Seeing how an individual visitor behaves, Nosto can provide actual one-to-one personalization in the recommendations. These profiles contain data on, for example: which categories the visitor is viewing, brand preferences, price affinity, location and even gender.

The revenue optimization layer analyses which products have the highest margin by looking at the past performance of the products. Then, when faced with multiple, seemingly similar products, Nosto's recommendations will automatically choose the products that will deliver the most revenue to the merchant. On top of these three layers, there are a set of rules that the merchants can determine themselves to achieve their specific business goals.

I experimented with two different approaches, a linear one that sets the layers on different points of a path and a more simplistic design (see images 24 and 25). Both of the versions were well received but the editability of the simpler approach made it easier to use in different materials, from an animated slideshow to a print ad. It is also an important part of the "How Nosto works"-booklet, summarising the content in one simple image. I have plans to use the linear infographic as an animated version, as I've already envisioned, how well this version would really pop out in this use case.



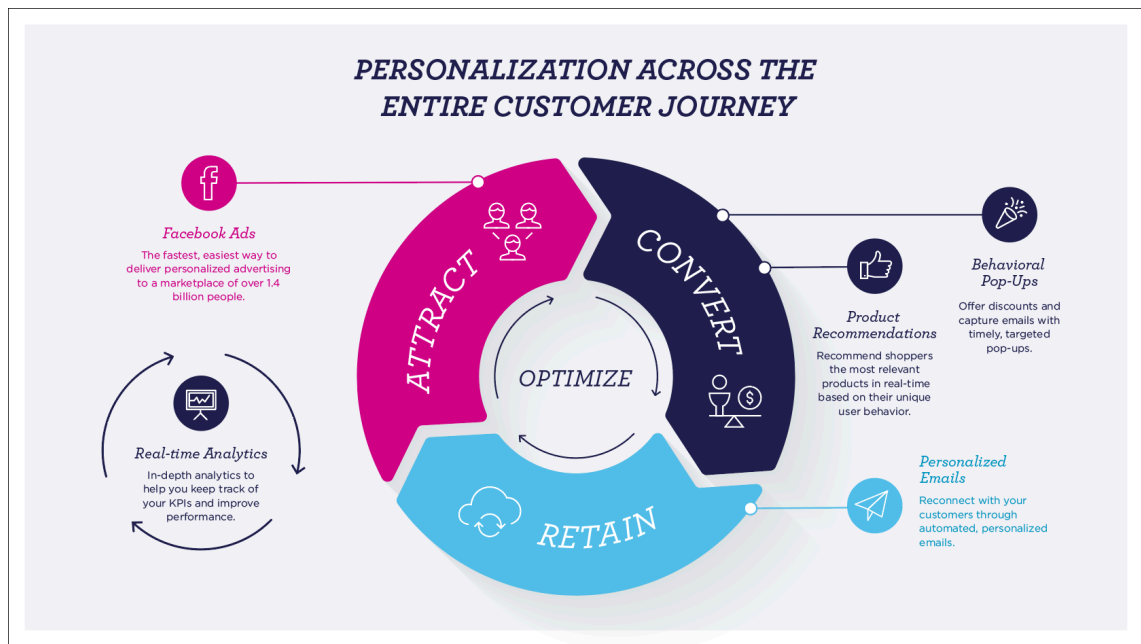


IMAGES 24–25. The first image is a work file from a linear visualization and the latter one is the finalized version of the design that is currently used in the new materials. (Salminen 2016.)

#### **6.4 Personalization Across the entire customer journey**

Next step was to visualize the so-called “ACRO”-model, that displays how the Nosto features help the merchant throughout the whole customer’s journey: attracting someone to the store, converting the visitor into a paying customer and retaining the customer to visit the store again in the future. Lastly, Nosto enables the merchant to continuously improve performance by offering real-time analytics.

The design challenge of the “ACRO”-model was the fact that this model was going to be used in so many materials, from a small, A6-sized ad to a three times three meter exhibition wall, in both, vertical and horizontal spaces. This is why there had to be multiple versions of the same infographic and a plan how to refine it in possible use cases that were not yet established (See images 26-27).



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IMAGES 26–27. Different ACRO use cases. Here we have two of the use cases, where the different versions of the infographic come handy. (Salminen 2016.)



## 6.5 Power of Nosto at events

As company offering a business-to-business solution, events such as exhibitions and partner meetings have a major effect on Nosto's revenue. That is why we were eager to utilize the new material in practice. Before completing the initial visualization described above, I set out to experiment with the subject of Customer Profiling Layer in an exhibition booth design for Internet Retailing Expo held in April 2016, in Birmingham (See image 28). The booth displays a set of imaginary ecommerce customers, and the kind of data that Nosto is able to gather of them to be able to ensure the best possible personalized recommendations.



IMAGE 28. I had a chance to visit IRX Birmingham myself and inspect how people reacted to it. Overall the reception was very positive and the sales team used the wall as a conversation starter with many guests. (Salminen, 2016).

After I've seen the people's reaction to the booth, it was easier to design one of the key deliverables of the whole project- the one pager. One pager, to put it simply, is a sheet of paper that describes the company's core offering to an interested party and encourages to find out more. These one pagers are perhaps the most important giveaway at exhibitions, but can be used in one-to-one meetings and many other events as well. The one pager I created was to explain the power of Nosto and the "ACRO"-model and tell more about the company. Cramming all this information on a single piece of A4 sheet while trying to keep the overall look harmonious and visually appealing was not an easy task but certainly an appealing one. It was also an exciting feeling, after a months of

work in this project, to then see everything finally fitting together and reclaiming its place in the story of Nosto. While this is not the end of the story, as we will continue to improve and optimise the messaging as the company and its technology continues to mature, it is an important milestone that will hopefully have a positive impact for the brand. As the project continues to implement the material I have created for new use cases, I will certainly follow closely on how it is received by the audience outside the company.

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Jack Stevens | Ecommerce Manager at OKA

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**Built for marketers. Loved by IT.**  
Nosto has been developed with busy ecommerce professionals in mind. Our easy-to-use interface allows you to create, launch and optimize multi-channel personalization campaigns in real-time, without the need for IT.

**Continuous learning. Continuous optimization.**  
With a rapidly growing community of over 15,000 retailers using Nosto across the globe, we are able to leverage vast amounts of data to uncover deep insights into what drives successful shopping experiences. Running tests across millions of daily visitors we know which personalization strategies work best for which kind of retailers and are continuously improving our algorithms to improve the performance on your store.

**An entire team dedicated to your success**  
Our in-house ecommerce experts have worked with thousands of retailers worldwide. Using these learnings we ensure you have the best personalization setup for your store and are continually optimizing for peak performance thereafter.

**Success-based pricing**  
Nosto's pricing scales with your business. No set-up costs. No fixed fees. No minimum contract lengths. We simply take a small % of the revenue we help you generate.

**Fast, easy implementation**  
Nosto has completely transformed the way personalization technology integrates with ecommerce stores. Our solution can be added to any site with just a few snippets of code, or a 1-click download of our module, allowing retailers to get up and running with personalization in days rather than months. This is where our patents lie and the reason we're the fastest-growing personalization solution in the world today.

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111 53 Stockholm  
Sweden

IMAGE 30. The new one pager of Nosto was designed to reposition the brand as a powerful personalization solution. (Salminen 2016.)

## CONCLUSIONS

The success of an online fashion store begins from the customer. The merchant has to be able to define the ideal target group for the store, since an online store cannot be a “one size fits all” –solution and the customers are often expecting a personalized shopping experience. This means taking into consideration the individual’s preferences, that can be revealed by constructing a user profile and tracking the customer’s behaviour on site.

Although the online world lacks face-to-face interaction, online stores can still combat buyer’s hesitation in various ways. First of all, customer service is a corner stone that cannot be overlooked. Ensuring that the customers’ questions are asked and concerns addressed both onsite and in social media is a time consuming task but research has found that poor customer service is the biggest reason for the customers to abandon the site. Although there is usually no face-to-face interaction in online shopping, the technology enables many solutions for providing customer care, starting from a ‘Frequently asked question’ section to online chat.

Customers’ concerns and fears can be addressed in the design of the site. A safety concerned shopper might be reassured by displaying security statements and badges provided by a third-party authority. The logos from the most well-known credit card providers and online payment companies are important to those concerned about credit card frauds. To some customers, the social assurance is the most important factor and to them reviews and feedback on social media are the deal breakers. An informative shopper requires detailed product information and quality photography. Quality product photos or even videos are perhaps even more important in the fashion vertical, than any other field.

Personalized recommendations enhance the shopping experience in many tangible ways. Firstly, showing the products that are popular and recently purchased by other customers, introduces the stock to a first-time visitor and might help then to find a product or a category they are interested in. On the product page, the recommendations can show, for example, other products that are similar to the one selected increasing the possibility that the visitor will find a product to purchase. Showing complementary

products enables cross-selling other items that fit together with the selected product. The customer can also be engaged by using limited-time offers.

The design of the site must be scalable so that it can be viewed with any device. On mobile, the site must also be optimised for hand gestures and enhanced navigation, while browsing through endless categories and subcategories on a small screen can discourage the customers from browsing further. The content must also be designed to fit the device, for instance by using the ‘mobile first’ –design, that is based on designing the smallest resolution first, with only the minimal elements and accelerating the design for the larger screens.

Quality content is the key for the store to attract new visitors and retaining a good relationship with the existing customers. Finding what drives the experience of the customers and transforming that into a series of enlightening blog posts is an excellent way to enhance the brand image and keeping the customers coming back to the site to read more. It is good to remember, that photography and videos also play a significant part in conveying a story, not only copy.

The whole customer journey must be considered when thinking about the shopping experience, and the online stores must possess tools to engage customers on every point of the path. The cohesive experience starts from identifying the ideal customer and attracting the customer to visit the site by utilising offsite advertising, such as Facebook ads. Once the visitor comes to the site, the experience has to be optimised to enable the best possible outcome; the visitor turning into a paying customer. As the existing customers are hugely valuable to the store, retaining the relationship with the clientele is a next priority.

Last but not least, when one has got to know the customer, designed a perfect user interface and produced quality content, the work does not stop there. The world of e-commerce is about continuous improvement, tireless optimization and deep learning. The iteration process should continue as long as the store itself exists.

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## **APPENDICES**

### **Appendix 1. Interview questions for Lari Lehtonen**

1. How does an average customer on an ecommerce site differ from the one visiting a brick-and-mortars- store?
2. What do you think are the most common concerns an e-customer has?
3. How has ecommerce changed the consumers? Have they for example become more price conscious? On average, are they willing to use more time to research the best options?
4. Do you think it is a good idea for an ecommerce company establish their marketing efforts based on the imaginary user personas that flesh out the average person of a target group? Are there any better options?
5. What do you think are the key factors that convince the visitor to become a paying customer? Is social proof important?
6. What kind of data can be collected from a visitor of an e-store?
7. How can this data be utilized to offer a more personalized experience to a visitor?

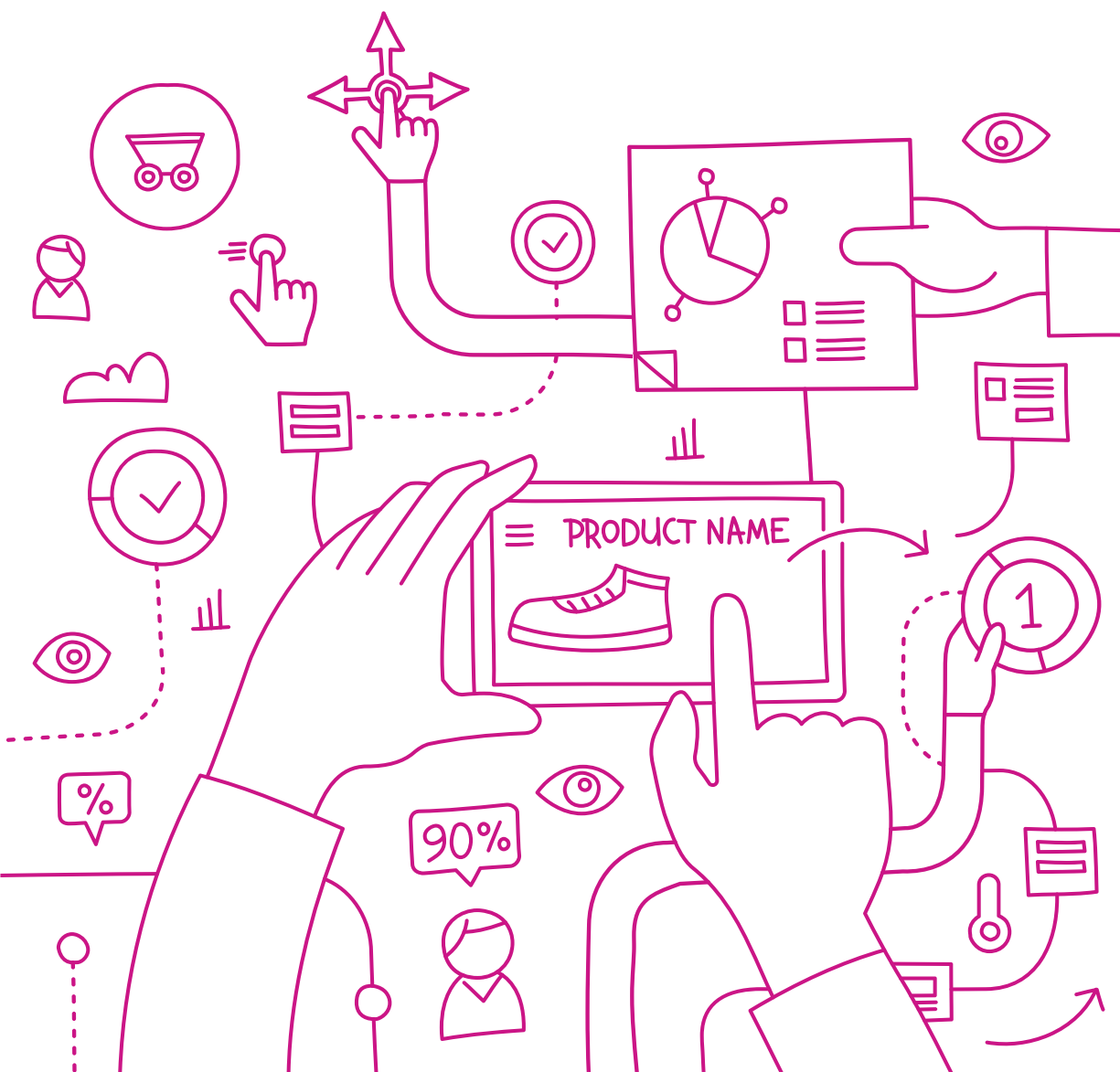
**Appendix 2. Interview questions for Stephen Fenech**

1. Is there any noticeable trends on how the customers are behaving on different devices when visiting an ecommerce store?
2. Have you noticed if curating the content by medium drives better results than having the same content regards of the device used?
3. Do you have any instructions on how the content on a mobile site might differ from the content on a full-scale website?
4. What are the biggest challenges on mobile ecommerce?
5. Responsive design, although highly necessary, might be also a bit limiting when it comes to visual design of the site, many sites tend to look similar etc. Do you think there's a workaround to the problem?
6. What do you think about the "mobile first" approach, where the mobile view with all the most essential elements is designed first and other views after that?

**Appendix 3. Interview questions for Lottie Coltman**

1. There is a strong trend towards more curated content creation, not only in ecommerce but all around the web. Why do you think that is?
2. How well must the merchants know their target group to be able to produce quality content to them? What kind of research do you suggest them to do?
3. If a merchant has a blog, how can the content be balanced so that it both creates more customers but doesn't come off too salesy?
4. Should an ecommerce company have a distinguished content strategy for different social media platforms? How far ahead can the content be planned out in advance? Should there be room for spontaneity?
5. How should messaging differ if we think about for example these three channels: blog, Facebook, Twitter?
6. Do you have any good examples of a company with an exceptionally great blog/social media presence or both?

# *How* **nosto** WORKS?

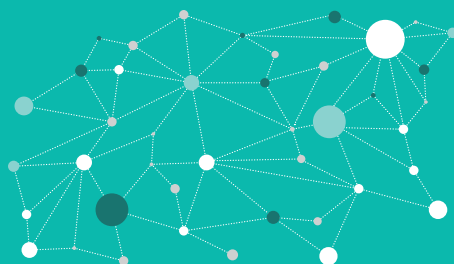


*The heart of our solution:*  
**NOSTO'S PERSONALIZATION ENGINE**

1.

### THE PRODUCT GRAPH

Nosto uses proprietary algorithms to analyze how visitors to your store interact with your products, automatically determining relationships between every product on your store.



2.

### CUSTOMER PROFILING LAYER

Creates rich behavioral profiles for every shopper, based on their past and present interactions with your site, providing true 1:1 personalization.



3.

### REVENUE OPTIMIZATION LAYER

Looks at the past performance of items and ranks them in terms of the expected revenue distribution. This data is then combined with the customer behaviour data to predict in real-time, how much revenue a particular item is likely to generate when shown to a customer.



4.

### MERCHANDISING RULES

Advanced merchandizing rules give you the power to customize the logic of the recommendations and underlying algorithms to help you achieve your specific business goals.



*The Most Relevant*  
**PRODUCT RECOMMENDATIONS**



THE HEART OF OUR SOLUTION:

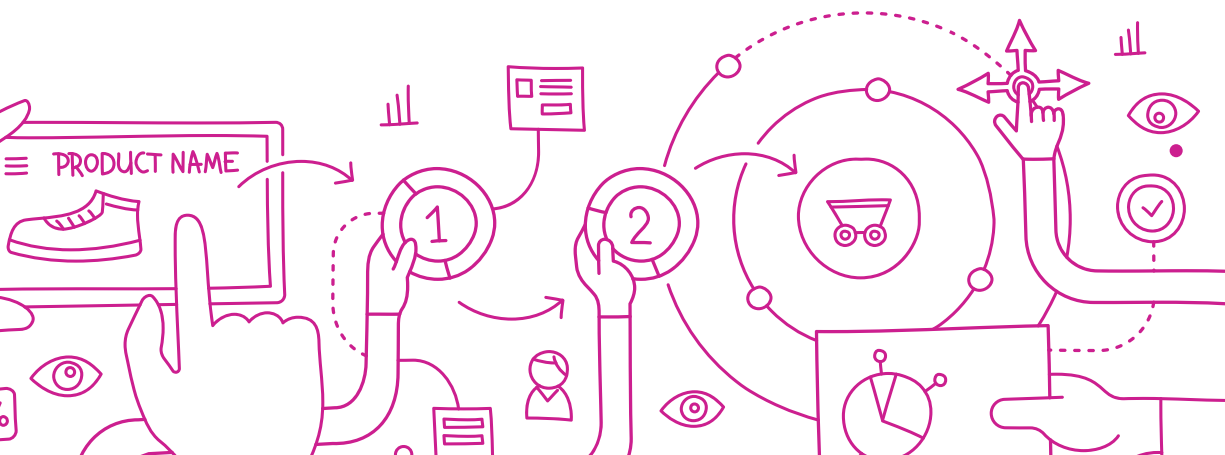
# NOSTO'S PERSONALIZATION ENGINE

Nosto's Personalization Engine leverages the power of big data to build a deep understanding of your store and every visitor interacting with it, allowing us to predict and automatically deliver the most relevant recommendations at any time, anywhere—maximizing conversion, average order value and customer retention.

## DEEP LEARNING, DEEP INSIGHTS.

Nosto's Personalization Engine consists of three core layers: the product graph, the customer profiling layer and the revenue optimization layer. These layers work together to build up a detailed picture of each store, updated with every interaction.

The power of our engine comes from the fact that we are constantly optimizing how to combine these three layers based on a unique analysis of each store at the exact moment a visitor interacts with it. [🔗](#)





MAPPING THE RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN  
EVERY PRODUCT ON YOUR STORE:

# THE PRODUCT GRAPH

Using proprietary algorithms Nosto analyzes how visitors interact with the products on your store to determine relationships between those products. For example, by looking at products frequently viewed together we can generate alternative product recommendations (“*customers who liked this also liked*”) and from products frequently bought together we can generate complementary product recommendations (“*customers who bought this, also bought*”). Once there is enough behavioral data, these algorithms tend to give the best results.

We then combine this data with deep learning content analysis to identify the relationships between products based on content similarity. This enables our engine to start building product relationships right away without having to wait for the full behavioral data to identify relationships, allowing Nosto to adapt much faster to new products being added to a store and retailers to start delivering personalized recommendations right away.

The result is a multi-layered product graph that maps the different relationships between every product on your store in order to know what products to recommend alongside others. These relationships are then updated in real-time with every visit to your store to ensure that you are recommending the most relevant items at all times. [↗](#)

UNDERSTANDING WHAT MAKES EVERY  
SHOPPER TICK

# CUSTOMER PROFILING LAYER

Nosto's customer profiling layer creates rich behavioral profiles on every visitor coming to your store, based on their past and present interactions with your site. In this way, we build upon the data in the product graph - marrying the wisdom of the crowd with each visitor's unique user behavior for true 1:1 personalization.

Our behavioral profiles contain data on, for example: a shopper's category preferences, brand preferences, price affinity, location, gender and any custom tags.

By profiling millions of users each day, our machines are constantly learning which users attributes have the biggest impact on behaviour. We then use these insights to determine which signals to use to produce the most impactful recommendations for each visitor coming to your store. [🔗](#)



PREDICTING A  
PRODUCT'S REVENUE  
POTENTIAL



# REVENUE OPTIMIZATION LAYER

Combined, the product graph and customer profiling layer allow us to predict the most relevant products to show a visitor at any moment in their shopping journey. Most recommendation engines will finish the job here. What they fail to take into consideration though is what recommendations are the most valuable for the retailers themselves.

## **THIS IS WHY WE HAVE DEVELOPED NOSTO'S REVENUE OPTIMIZATION LAYER...**

Our revenue optimization layer analyzes which products are converting the highest in your store by looking at the past performance of all your products and ranking them in terms of the expected revenue distribution of each individual product. We then use this data to predict in real-time how much revenue displaying a particular item to a visitor is most likely to generate.

So, when faced with multiple products that are seemingly similar, Nosto will automatically choose the one that will deliver the most revenue for you.

This is an incredibly powerful layer in the engine, taking our personalization solution one step further as we continually optimize for your growth. [↗](#)

*Just like a shopkeeper would do at a physical store, it would be trained to recommend the items which have the best margin for the business whilst still showing the most relevant items to the customers based on their tastes and needs.*



# A COMPLETE PERSONALIZATION SOLUTION

*ATTRACT*



## FACEBOOK ADS

The fastest, easiest way to deliver personalized advertising to a marketplace of over 1.4 billion people.

*CONVERT*



## PRODUCT RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommend shoppers the most relevant products in real-time based on their unique user behavior.

*RETAIN*



## BEHAVIORAL POP-UPS

Offer discounts and capture emails with timely, targeted pop-ups.

*OPTIMIZE*



## REALTIME ANALYTICS


In-depth analytics to help you keep track of your KPIs and improve performance.

*Nosto's all-in-one personalization solution allows you to automatically deliver the most relevant recommendations in real-time across any channel.*

**...ALL BROUGHT SEAMLESSLY INTO ONE PLATFORM,** making it easy for you to manage all of your personalized marketing campaigns from one place.

What makes Nosto so powerful is that we are continuously gathering the data from interactions on all these channels (*eg email sent, recommendation clicked, discount pop-up shown*) and combining them to provide the most up-to-date view of each customer and your store at any given moment. In this way, what happens in one channel can be used to improve the personalization in another.

So, if a user sees a personalized ad on Facebook, we can trigger a Behavioral Pop-up when they land on your site to ensure you capture their email address to nurture them with personalized emails later on.

The beauty of all this is that as Nosto continues to evolve and add new touch points, you can start delivering personalized experiences on those channels immediately! 

# CONTINUOUS LEARNING. CONTINUOUS OPTIMIZATION.

With a rapidly growing community of over 15,000 online stores using Nosto across the globe, we are able to leverage vast amounts of data to uncover deep insights into what drives successful shopping experiences.

***15,000+*** *online stores.*

***140*** *countries.*

***1 billion*** *anonymized  
user profiles.*

Running tests across millions of daily visitors we know which personalization strategies work best for which kind of retailers and are continuously improving our algorithms to improve the performance on your store.

...and this will only get better over time. As our community grows, the faster our learning will become allowing you to benefit from the latest in personalization technology at all times.



## POWERFUL PERSONALIZATION. MADE EASY.

Nosto has completely transformed the way personalization technology integrates with ecommerce stores. Whilst traditional personalization solutions require a complicated, costly back-end integration, Nosto can be added to any site with just a few snippets of code, or a 1-click download of our module, allowing retailers to get up and running with personalization in days rather than months.

This is where our patents lie and the reason we're the fastest-growing personalization solution in the world today.

## NOSTO HANDLES THE HARD WORK SO YOU CAN CONCENTRATE ON WHAT YOU DO BEST.

Our easy-to-use interface has been designed with busy marketers and commerce professionals in mind, allowing you to create, launch and optimize multi-channel personalization campaigns in minutes, without the need of IT support.


Removing the reliance on additional code not only gives you the power to move fast in the ever-changing world of commerce but naturally reduces the total cost of ownership too.

And with Nosto's Real-time Analytics we enable you to track the performance of your personalization campaigns right down to the individual recommendation metrics - all the data you need to make intelligent decisions on how to optimize for improved performance.



## ONE PLATFORM, INFINITE POSSIBILITIES

Nosto's advanced Merchandizing Rules give you the power to customize the logic of the recommendations and underlying algorithms to help you achieve your specific business goals. We give you full control over which recommendations to display to which target audience and make it easy for you to customize the design for any channel.

And with our API we enable you to extend the power of Nosto's personalization to even more channels. Integrate Nosto seamlessly with your mobile app or within your offline store and track customers across their entire shopping journey for a single view of the customer. 



*Built by a team of engineers and data scientists  
with years of experience in commerce.*

# NOSTO'S PATENTS AND WHY THEY ARE IMPORTANT

*Nosto has filed 2 patents  
(both currently pending):*

**PATENT #1:** relates to the way we gather the product data from the retailer's store (eg *product price, description, availability, etc*).

Most personalization solutions do this via a product feed.

The problem with this method tho is that it requires a back-end integration which can

be complicated, costly and time-consuming to set up. In addition, the updates are typically scheduled at intervals (eg *every 8 hours*) meaning that the data is not always up to date, meaning there is a risk that the retailer could be missing out on more relevant recommendations or even recommending out of stock products.

Nosto's innovation is that we circumvent the need for a product feed by using the visitors of the website to provide the product information. By adding just a few snippets of HTML and javascript code to the store, we set up a real-time data exchange between the retailer's store and our cloud.



Every time a user then loads a page on the store, we use that as a trigger to capture the latest product information, together with the user's behavioral data on how they have interacted with the store. In this way, Nosto has a real-time replica of the retailer's product catalogue at all times as well as up-to-date profiles on each user (*who they are, where they come from, what they viewed, added to cart and bought, etc*).

#### **THIS UNIQUE APPROACH BRINGS WITH IT SIGNIFICANT BENEFITS OVER TRADITIONAL METHODS OF BACK-END INTEGRATION:**


- » ***Ease and speed of implementation*** - Nosto can be added to any online store, regardless of size or platform without it becoming a complicated, costly IT project.
- » ***Less technical risk*** - as Nosto integrates through the UI layer it touches less of the core code base.
- » ***Real-time relevance*** - unlike other solutions which often have to wait for a product refresh to get the most up-to-date data on your store, Nosto's algorithms are updated in real-time with every page load.
- » ***Speed*** - there is no risk of slowing down site speed with Nosto - actually often it's the opposite: the product pages load quicker because they are now loading just a single product, whereas previously it had to lookup multiple products. Nosto takes the pressure off loading the recommended products, meaning your store will also be better at handling traffic peaks.
- » ***Cost*** - all the above combine to reduce the cost of implementation and ongoing management significantly.

#### **PATENT #2 EXTENDS PATENT #1 TO ADD:**

- » ***sharing the product catalogue information*** with other service providers  
(*eg ad networks*).
- » ***syncing the user identifier*** across to other service providers

→ thus enabling personalization across other service providers by using the personalization and catalogue data gathered in the original patent.

**ALTHOUGH WE WORK ON UNIQUE RECOMMENDATION ALGORITHM APPROACHES EVERY DAY,** we chose not to start patenting those. Instead of focusing our patents on the recommendation algorithms, we took a different path, one similar to the Wright brothers when learning to fly: we focused on the integration and delivery required for recommendation algorithms to work, creating a system that is low-cost and fast for retailers to implement and then combined with risk-free pricing.

It's said that the reason Wright brothers were the first to fly is because they developed a way to iterate fast, enabling quick trial and error. Developing recommendations algorithms is similarly a very iterative process. By focusing on delivery and integration in the first place, we now have thousands of merchants using Nosto, enabling us to continuously develop our recommendations faster and faster with shorter iteration cycles. It is this innovation that has made it possible for Nosto to become the fastest growing personalisation engine in the world. 



*To learn more visit our  
website or get in touch with our  
ecommerce specialists!*



# Personalizing the world of commerce

*Every customer is unique.  
Are you treating them that way?*



# DID YOU KNOW...

*...that for every \$92 spent on acquiring visitors, less than \$1 is spent on converting them into customers? While we tend to think that anything above a 3% conversion rate is something to be happy about in an online setting, this would be seen as catastrophic in a brick and mortar store.*

**ON AVERAGE** retailers are now spending 90% of their marketing budgets driving traffic to their stores, whether it be SEO, PPC, affiliate marketing or social media channels. But what happens when those visitors get there? On most online stores, they all see exactly the same thing: it makes no difference whether they are male or female, a first time shopper or a regular customer, or whether they are based in London or New York.

*It is little surprise that bounce rates are on the rise and conversion rates are a perennial challenge for online retailers.*



## The impact of personalization

*Personalization has become an essential part of ecommerce during the recent couple of years because it allows retailers to meet each customer's needs and wants faster and more efficiently than ever before, offering customers the most relevant content at all points throughout the customer journey.*



increased  
conversion



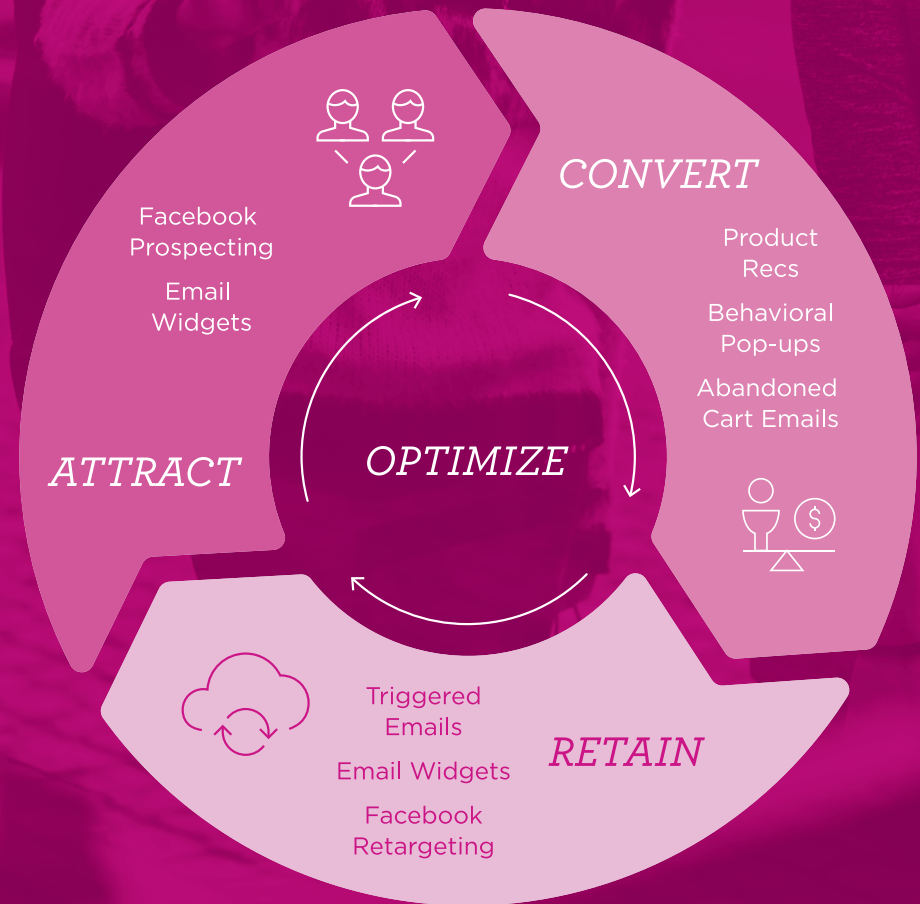
higher satisfaction  
& loyalty

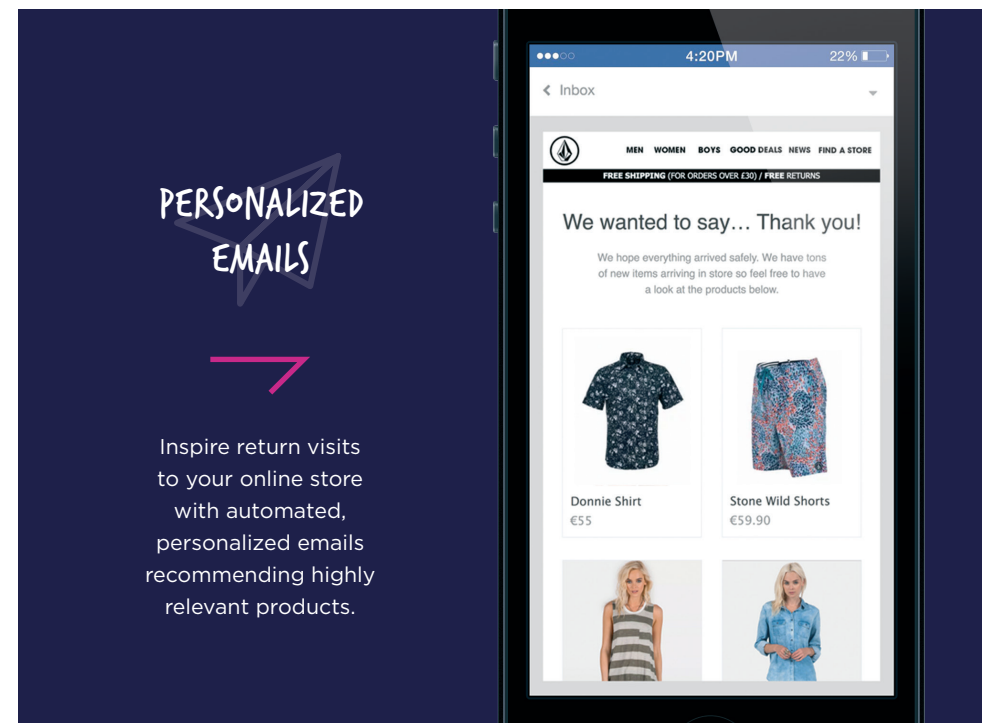
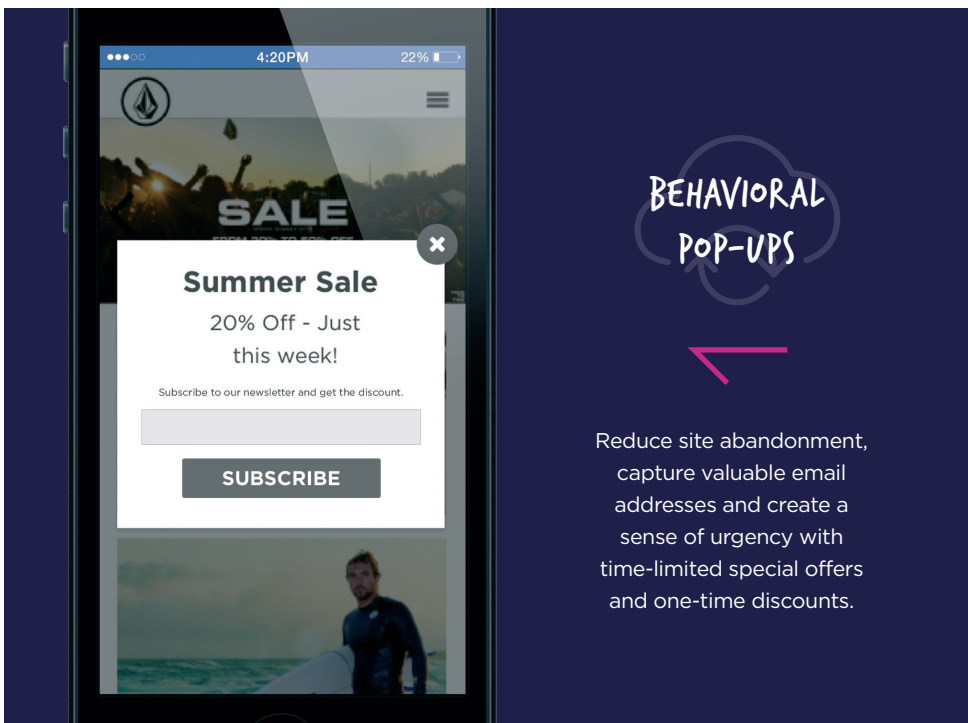


boosted  
sales

# PERSONALIZATION MADE EASY

*- wherever your customers are*







## Merchant success story

### Customers who clicked Nosto recommendations...



“Nosto was very easy to implement and has a great live dashboard with reporting to help us learn more about our customers and provide them with a more tailored shopping experience. It has also allowed us to add several new features to our site very quickly, and we are taking full advantage of the new features Nosto launches on almost a monthly basis. It has helped us learn more about how our customers shop and react quickly which has really highlighted how important this full personalization service is for us.”

**Alison Sebens**

Executive Vice President at Yumi Kim  
www.yumikim.com

### About Yumi Kim

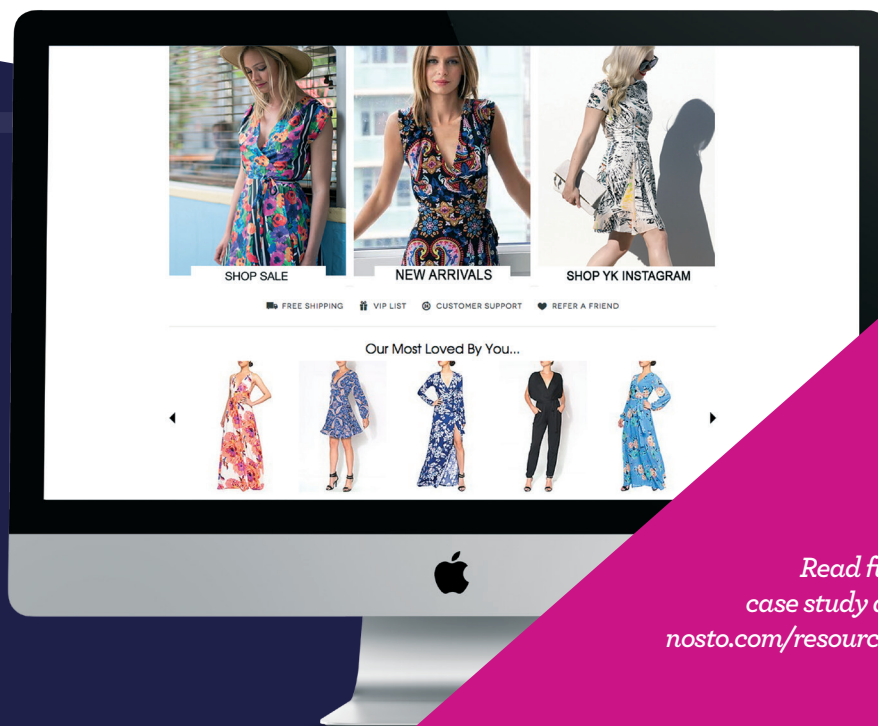
The Yumi Kim fashion brand is influenced by designer and founder Kim Phan's own aesthetics; featuring vintage silhouettes spun with a contemporary urban feminine mystique. The selection is made up of beautiful clothes made to travel and see the world. Yumi Kim has five shops in New York, and wide wholesale distribution in addition to its online store.

### Challenge

Priding itself with a personal touch to all of its designs, the company felt it was not able to deliver the same personal touch to the online store. It was hard to target customers personally and properly engage them like they were being engaged in the brick and mortar shops.

### Solution

- Top list on front page
- Automatic cross-sell and up-sell features on product pages
- Personalized recommendations on cart page
- Search and visit related recommendations on search page
- All triggered email types enabled: We Miss You, Order Follow Up and Abandoned Cart emails
- Site Abandonment Pop-up enabled
- Personalized Facebook Ads enabled



Read full  
case study at:  
[nosto.com/resources](https://nosto.com/resources)



## Merchant success story

### Customers who clicked Nosto recommendations...



“Our conversion rate and units-sold per transaction have seen a significant increase since going live with Nosto. We’ve been really happy with the solution and have been astonished by the pace Nosto has launched new features allowing us to even better connect with our customers!”

**Matthieu Galtie**

Volcom Digital Marketing & Ecommerce Director  
www.volcom.com

### About Volcom

Volcom is a modern lifestyle brand that embodies the creative spirit of youth culture. Founded on a snowboarding trip in 1991, Volcom became the pioneer for surfing, skateboarding and snowboarding, all brought together under one brand. The company today prides itself on having a wide range of products and styles that incorporate a distinctive mixture of fashion and function combined with quality, comfort and athletic performance.

### Challenge

Volcom opened its online store in 2014 and with limited resources, daily manual cross selling & upselling recommendations became challenge. To avoid visitor frustration and to ensure the best browsing experience, Volcom set out to find a personalization solution which would be easy to set up and manage, would be performance based, and would match Volcom’s UX standard.

### Solution

- Best sellers on front and category pages
- Browsing history recommendations on category, product and search pages
- Automatic cross-sell and up-sell features added to product pages
- Out of stock and 404 pages enhanced with top lists and browsing history
- Shopping cart recommendations and personalized recommendations on cart page
- Search and visit related recommendations on search page
- Site Abandonment Pop-up enabled
- Personalized Facebook ads enabled



Read full  
case study at:  
[nosto.com/resources](https://nosto.com/resources)

## About nosto

*Nosto is a Magento Gold Technology Partner providing ecommerce professionals a complete personalization solution. Deliver your customers personalized shopping experiences, wherever they are.*

Developed with busy ecommerce professionals and ease of use in mind, Nosto is the most effective way to build and launch personalized marketing campaigns without the need for dedicated IT resources. The seamless integration on Magento ensures that your rich data isn't being locked away in silos, but can be accessed and utilized efficiently through one complete personalization solution - Nosto.

Join over 15,000 retailers in over 150 countries using Nosto to grow their business and delight their customers, and sign up for your free 14-day trial at:

[www.nosto.com](http://www.nosto.com) | [sales@nosto.com](mailto:sales@nosto.com)

### Some of our Clients

**LUSH**  
FRESH HANDMADE COSMETICS

**SUN DIEGO**  
BOARD SHOP

**GOLFDiscount**  
.com

**HOM**

**FLIGHT CLUB**

**Vivienne Westwood**

**VOLCOM**

**puravida**  
bracelets

**BJÖRN BORG**

**FJÄLL RÄVEN**

### Nosto runs on any platform, including

**shopify partner**

**MAGENTO**  
**GOLD**  
TECHNOLOGY PARTNER

**OFFICIAL PRESTASHOP**  
PARTNER

**Bigcommerce**

**hybris**

**Übercart**

**DRUPAL**  
COMMERCE

**WOO** COMMERCE

**Tictail**

**JTL Shop**

**MyCashflow**

**shopware**

**volusion**

# GETTING STARTED

## Easy and risk free



### No upfront costs

There are no installation costs or subscription fees with Nosto. We simply take 1-4 % of revenues we help you generate.



### Easy implementation

Nosto is as easy to add to your site as Google Analytics. With just a few snippets of code, you can be up-and-running in days, rather than months. It is that simple.



### Constant control

Nosto comes with an easy-to-use dashboard which provides full user control for all Nosto features, allowing you to be truly self-sufficient.



### Satisfaction guaranteed

Use the data already gathered on your site and see results immediately. If you don't like Nosto, you can stop using it any time.



### Risk-free

We never tie you into a contract - if you don't like Nosto, you can stop using it at any time.



### Platform agnostic

Nosto is a truly platform independent solution, and can be implemented seamlessly with any online shop or commerce platform.



# INTRIGUED?

**Contact us for a free recommendation  
concept of your store and to learn the impact  
personalization can have on your customer  
journey and online sales!**



*Get in touch with our ecommerce specialists!*



Nosto Solutions Ltd



| [www.nosto.com](http://www.nosto.com)



| [sales@nosto.com](mailto:sales@nosto.com)



# *The Complete Personalization Solution for Magento*

ATTRACT

CONVERT

RETAIN

OPTIMIZE



Facebook  
Ads



Personalized  
Emails



Product  
Recommendations



Realtime  
Analytics



Behavioral  
Pop-Ups



Magento Gold  
Technology  
Partner

GET STARTED TODAY! [www.nosto.com](http://www.nosto.com) | [sales@nosto.com](mailto:sales@nosto.com)





# *Every customer is unique. Are you treating them that way?*

*Deliver your customers personalized shopping experiences, at every touch point, across every device.*

At Nosto, we believe that every customer is unique. That's why we analyze hundreds of thousands of data points across your store in real-time, to help you go beyond the numbers and see the individual.

Our patent-pending technology combines proprietary algorithms and big data analytics to automatically predict the best products and offers for each customer based on a moment-by-moment analysis of their unique user behavior, ensuring you are delivering the right products, at the right time, in the right place.

**13%**

Average Increase  
in Revenue

**7x**

Average  
ROI

## *A Complete Personalization Solution*

*Increase customer lifetime value by personalizing the entire customer journey...*

**ATTRACT**

**CONVERT**

**RETAIN**

**OPTIMIZE**



### **FACEBOOK ADS**

The fastest, easiest way to deliver personalized advertising to a marketplace of over 1.4 billion people.



### **BEHAVIORAL POP-UPS**

Offer discounts and capture emails with timely, targeted pop-ups.



### **PRODUCT RECOMMENDATIONS**

Recommend shoppers the most relevant products in real-time based on their unique user behavior.



### **PERSONALIZED EMAILS**

Reconnect with your customers through Nosto's Triggered emails. Personalize your existing emails with Email Widgets.



### **REALTIME ANALYTICS**

In-depth analytics to help you keep track of your KPIs and improve performance.

**15,000+ online stores. 140 countries.**  
**1 billion anonymized user profiles.**



*“Nosto has been able to help us allocate our resources smarter and allow us to focus on running our business more efficiently. The fact that our site is always automatically updated and individually targeting each visitor allows us to utilize the full potential of our online store to increase customer satisfaction and our online sales.”*

**Jack Stevens** | Ecommerce Manager at OKA



### *One Platform. Infinite Possibilities.*

Nosto's all-in-one solution allows you to manage all your personalization campaigns from one place. With rich customization options and advanced merchandizing rules we give you full control over which recommendations to display, when, where and to whom. With our advanced API we enable you to extend the power of Nosto's personalization to even more channels.

### *Built for marketers. Loved by IT.*

Nosto has been developed with busy ecommerce professionals in mind. Our easy-to-use interface allows you create, launch and optimize multi-channel personalization campaigns in real-time, without the need for IT.

### *Continuous learning.*

### *Continuous optimization.*

With a rapidly growing community of over 15,000 retailers using Nosto across the globe, we are able to leverage vast amounts of data to uncover deep insights into what drives successful shopping experiences. Running tests across millions of daily visitors we know which personalization strategies work best for which kind of retailers and are continuously improving our algorithms to improve the performance on your store.

### *An entire team dedicated to your success*

Our in-house ecommerce experts have worked with thousands of retailers worldwide. Using these learnings we ensure you have the best personalization setup for your store and are continually optimizing for peak performance thereafter.

### *Success-based pricing*

Nosto's pricing scales with your business. No set-up costs. No fixed fees. No minimum contract lengths. We simply take a small % of the revenue we help you generate.

### *Fast, easy implementation*

Nosto has completely transformed the way personalization technology integrates with ecommerce stores. Our solution can be added to any site with just a few snippets of code, or a 1-click download of our module, allowing retailers to get up and running with personalization in days rather than months. This is where our patents lie and the reason we're the fastest-growing personalization solution in the world today.

**GET STARTED TODAY!**

[www.nosto.com](http://www.nosto.com)

[sales@nosto.com](mailto:sales@nosto.com)

*Works seamlessly with any platform, including:*



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+44 (0) 20 3510 4049

#### STOCKHOLM

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111 53 Stockholm  
Sweden





# *Every customer is unique.*

*Are you treating them that way?*

Get started today!

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Increase customer lifetime value by personalizing the entire customer journey...

ATTRACT

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RETAIN

OPTIMIZE



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